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COVER: Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes, Deborah Kerr in *THE INNOCENTS* (1961), and Boris Karloff on the set of *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939).

Photo of Boris Karloff printed with the special permission of Arts & Entertainment.



# Scarlet Letters



It was great to meet you all at the Mystery and Science Fiction Book Fair in New York, and to finally put faces with all your names. And to finally pick up the wonderful reprint of the rare first issue of *SS*. I can't tell you what a delight it was to see how *Scarlet Street* began, and, yes, while it isn't as slick as future issues would become, it is chockful of the stuff for which *SS* has become famous.

I have never written a fan letter to a mag before (and I've been reading genre magazines since the '50s), but I felt I just had to. *Scarlet Street* is so well produced, the articles so well written, the films discussed so much fun (I mean, WHO KILLED TEDDY BEAR?—what could be better than that, except I BURY THE LIVING?), and the art direction so terrific, that one waits with baited breath (whatever that is), for each new issue. Not being able to stomach most of the crap that passes for film today, it's great to revel in lost, forgotten, or fondly remembered gems from the past. And nobody unearths them better than *SS*. So, keep up the great work. It's truly appreciated.

Bruce Kimmel

Varèse Sarabande Records  
Santa Monica, CA

Richard Valley replies: When Bruce Kimmel was masterminding CD releases of such Broadway musicals as *A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM* for the now defunct Bay City label, I wrote him a fan letter—so now we're even. For those whose musical tastes are more attuned to horror scores, turn to page 34 for the latest notes on *Our Man Bruce*, and stay tuned for the following *Scarlet Letter*:

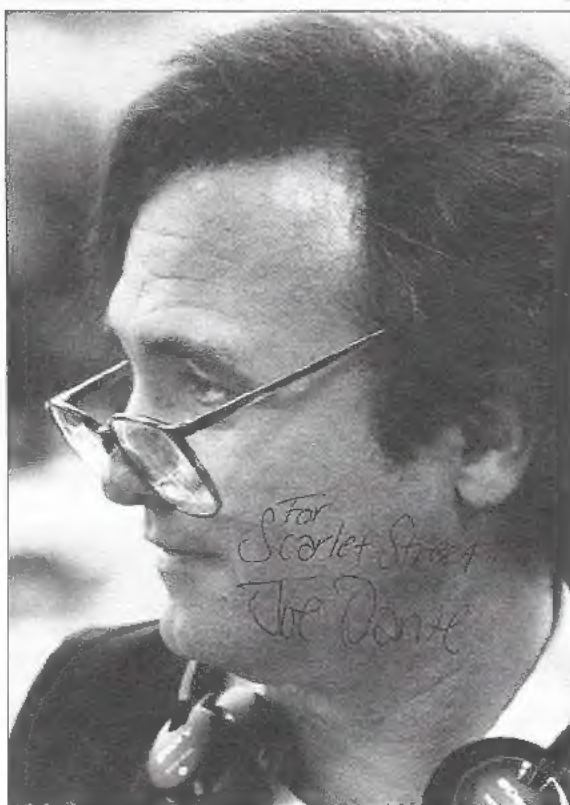
Regarding Michael Brunas' fond mention of "Joe Dante's Movie Guide feature" in Cal Beck's late lamented *Castle of Frankenstein* magazine (in his *Terror on Tape/Creature Features Strike Back* tandem review, *SS* #19), I should set the record straight. Although I did initiate the idea of a thorough A thru Z capsule review series, the issue by issue details were always

handled by Bhub Stewart, who wrote at least as many of the notices as I did, and had seen a lot more of the movies. Bhub was the man behind the curtain at *COF* and has received too little credit for his contribution to that unique publication, which served for nascent '60s fright fans as the missing link between the fun-and-pun-filled world of *Famous Monsters* and the brainier climes of *Sight and Sound*—neither of which could boast that inimitable *COF* ink that came off on your hands.

Joe Dante  
Renfield Productions  
The Walt Disney Studios  
Burbank, CA

In response to Mark McGee's letter (*SS* #19), I agree that Frank Skinner is vastly underrated concerning his

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Joe Dante

contribution to the music of Universal's horror genre of the '40s and '50s. His score to *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* set the tone and style for the entire period and if I had to pick my all-time favorite Universal horror score, it would be *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*! However, Hans Salter also played a significant role in creating music for the horror films of the '40s. His *GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* was equally re-used in countless Universal films throughout the '40s and '50s, and his "monster motif" was used to identify the Monster in the subsequent two *Frankenstein* films. Somehow, Skinner's "monster motif" from *SON* ended up in the *Mummy* films! Although the cue sheets from these films are filled with inaccuracies, it is clear from my research that both Skinner and Salter pretty much shared composing duties on *THE WOLF MAN*, with Charles Previn composing a few noteworthy cues. Marco Polo's upcoming releases of the complete *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* and suites from *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*, *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS*, and *THE WOLF MAN* should help set the record straight, as I identified every cue with who composed what.

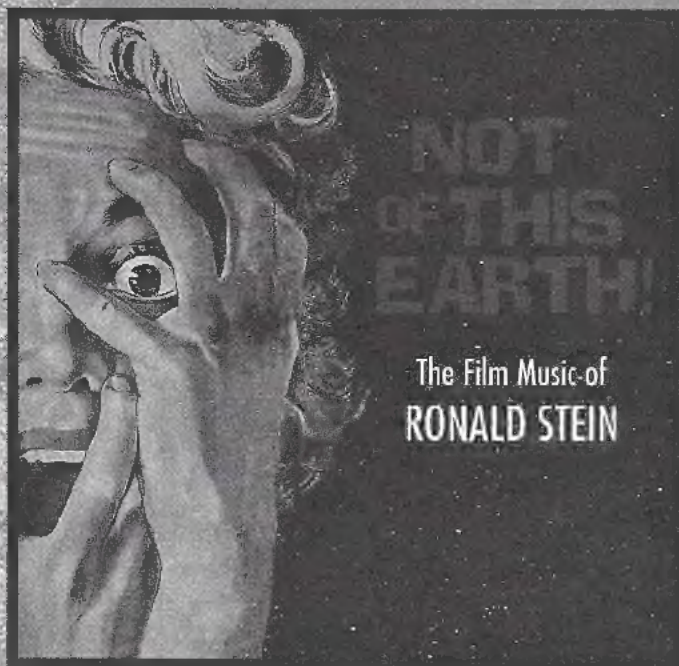
Fans of the macabre, semi-macabre, and film noirish music of the '40s will (hopefully) be delighted that I am preparing music for a new recording from BMG that will contain music from Adolph Deutsch's *THE MALTESE FALCON* and *ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT*, as well as Frederick Hollander's *THE VERDICT* (Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre), among others. For Marco Polo, I am doing a Max Steiner album that will include *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS*.

Continued on page 8



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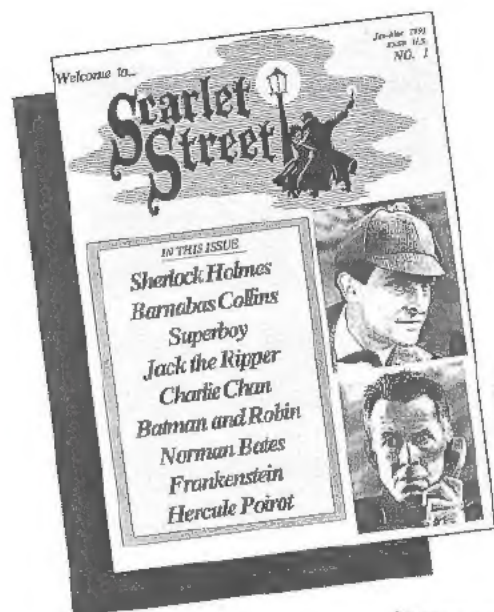
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Everything about *Scarlet Street* appeals to the perverse lust for lunacy in me. Congratulations on a job well done.

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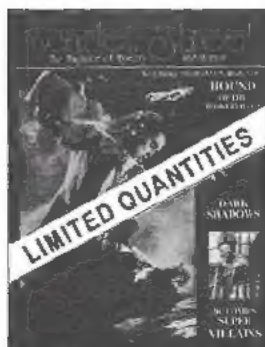
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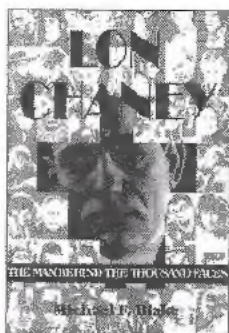
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### SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

I want to thank *Scarlet Street* and Richard Scrivani for a pleasant interview that was accurate and, more importantly, didn't make me sound like an idiot. I enjoy your magazine enormously.

John W. Morgan  
Tarzana, CA

Many thanks for *Scarlet Street's* continuing spotlight on the old horror music penned for Universal's famed monster movies of the late 1930s and '40s. Although the album released last year containing suites from *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* and *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* went a fair ways toward correcting the ridiculous neglect long shown this vibrant music, the two albums being released this fall obliterate this neglect in a bristling way only true fans could appreciate. One, of course, has extensive suites for *THE WOLF MAN*, *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* and *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS*, the other has the absolute tops of all Universal horror scores — the complete music for *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, embracing vivid themes for *The Wolf Man*, *Dracula*,

*Frankenstein Monster*, and the homicidal hunchback, not to mention lots of gypsy gyrations. And this time the eager forces involved in the recording have adhered strictly to the proper tempos and balances required.

Regarding Mark McGee's letter about too much attention being given to Universal composer Hans Salter and too little to Frank Skinner and longtime associate Charles Previn: As author of the albums' liner notes and third partner (along with conductor William Stromberg and orchestrator John Morgan) in the recording of these two horror albums (which, as we say here in Texas, is "near-imminent," if not already in release), I can assure Mr. McGee that every individual track from all scores is now fully credited to the composer who actually wrote it. That includes not only credit to Skinner for his dynamic *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* score and likewise to Charles Previn for his memorably mysterious bits for *THE WOLF MAN*, but also shedding the limelight on the woefully neglected Paul Dessau. Mr. Dessau's adventurous sort of writing for 1944's *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* made its score the most advanced

and most musically reasoned of them all, though Hans Salter's insight into the film's practical needs also kept it all in focus.

For what it's worth, John Morgan, Bill Stromberg and I are definitely among those who, like Mr. McGee, feel Frank Skinner deserves more than he's gotten. Who knows? Perhaps the future will right that wrong, possibly even from the bold Marco Polo label which is producing the albums mentioned above. Certainly, Skinner's music for *SABOTEUR* (how about that wild sequence when Robert Cummings breaks his chains with a car fan blade!), *DESTROY RIDES AGAIN*, and *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* rate prompt, first-rate attention in the recording studio.

At least the recording, at long last, of *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* begins what we all hope is a trend in the right direction. And wouldn't it be nice, also, to hear some of Paul Dessau's other film music, written in the period before he fled Hollywood for East Germany?

Bill Whitaker  
Abilene, TX

Continued on page 10



# Frankly Scarlet

You've got your demons, you've got desires...

—The Eagles

**G**reetings, Scarlet Streeters! My space is severely limited this issue, so let's get to it.

As the above quote from the Eagles' "One of These Nights" will attest, the subject of this issue's lecture is the inner demon that haunts and taunts us all. As cases in point, let's briefly scrutinize three women with singular problems.

First, there's Miss Giddens, a Victorian governess governed by severely repressed emotions. Does she really think the children in her care have been possessed by the spirits of two malevolently randy ghosts, or have her own sexual inhibitions imbued THE INNOCENTS with raging libidos quite beyond their years?

Then there's Eleanor Lance, reluctant lightning rod to psychic phenomena, who feels that she has never quite belonged anywhere. Can the not-quite-departed dead really be calling to her, entreating her to join them in THE HAUNTING of Hill House?

And what about Barbara Farren, a living ghost in her own home, consumed by frustration that her aged mother does not recognize her? Is Barbara's rage so great that she would actually kill Amy Reed, the young girl who has "stolen" her mother's affection, bringing THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE yet again to Oliver Reed and his wife, Alice?

You'll meet them all in this issue of *Scarlet Street*. You'll also meet those blessed by gentler desires, such as a young girl whose love spans time and inspires an artist to paint a PORTRAIT OF JENNIE.

Yes, it's *Scarlet Street* #20, and you won't find a more spectacular array

Courtesy of Arts and Entertainment



of articles and interviews in any other mag. Sit back and meet Deborah Kerr, Jeremy Brett, Russ Tamblyn, Martin Stephens, Elizabeth Russell, David Wayne, Mark Hamill, Beverly Garland, John Carpenter, and Roger Corman... and don't forget to stop back next issue when we celebrate our fifth anniversary!

\*\*\*

In our quest for the best, we've graced this issue's cover with a full-color frame blowup of Boris Karloff on the set of SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939). The shot (and the one on this page) is taken from home-movie footage featured in A&E's BIOGRAPHY of the King of Horror, one of three monstrous bios (the other two celebrate Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney, Jr.) sure to delight horror fans, and its printed here with A&E's special permission. Watch for BIOGRAPHY or you can order all three shows from *Scarlet Street* Video! (See the ad on page 108.)

\*\*\*

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the fine, musically-inclined folks at Footlight Records, who kindly let us use their splendid reproduction of the PORTRAIT OF JENNIE for the article of the same name. Soundtrack collectors will find no better friend than Footlights, which is located at 113 East 12th Street, New York City, NY 10003. Or give them a call (212-533-1572) and tell 'em *Scarlet Street* sent you!

\*\*\*

One last note: one of my gentler desires, voiced in a column several issues ago, was that Ray Walston cop an Emmy this year for his extraordinary work on the CBS series PICKET FENCES. Well, he did! He's happy. I'm happy. The other nominees probably aren't too happy, but what the hell....

*Richard Valley*

It is, perhaps, nostalgia for that mysterious bygone era, so eloquently described by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, which has helped perpetrate the fascination with the world of Victorian crime in foggy, gas-lit London. He takes the reader into a world before computers and forensic science, a world in which Sherlock Holmes stands head and shoulders above all other heroes of detective fiction. The Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company is situated in London's Baker Street.

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### SCARLET LETTERS

*Continued from page 8*

I enjoyed your interview with John Neville (#19) and his reminiscences on donning the deerstalker. His portrayal of the one and only Sherlock Holmes was not, however, limited to the stage and screen; he also lent his voice to the forgotten medium of dramatic radio. The name of the adventure was *THE INCREDIBLE MURDER OF CARDINAL TOSCA*, broadcast on the wireless of the CBC, July 31, 1978.

Lawrence Nepodahl  
DeKalb, IL

Obviously *Scarlet Street's* editors don't need me to defend their actions (nor, I'm sure, do they want me to), but I feel an inexplicable urge to respond to a letter written by James Janis in issue #19, regarding the possibility of this magazine having a "gay agenda." I think that's a rather extreme reaction.

Something I've come to understand is that a magazine's contents are subject to two things: what sells, and what the editor likes. Articles and editorials are naturally written through the filter of the writer's own preferences, perceptions, and opin-

ions. There is certainly nothing wrong with that, and any reader should understand this going in.

Thus, we see three different things in *Scarlet Street*. We see the kind of features that we'd expect from a mystery and horror magazine (using #19 as an example): the wonderful articles about *A STUDY IN TERROR*, *Jack the Ripper*, and *Herman Cohen*. We also see the things that are popular and will sell magazines: *Batman* and *Judge Dredd*, which have but a tenuous association with the "mystery" aspect and have as much place here as does a *Dirty Harry* movie. (One can use the excuse that *Batman* is a detective, but let's face it, these movies have nothing to do with detecting and everything to do with explosions.) And we see things that the staff likes: non-genre productions such as *TALES OF THE CITY*—there have been a number of Hitchcock homages on episodes of *THE SIMPSONS*, and they even ended the season with a whodunit cliffhanger, but you're not going to see *THE SIMPSONS* discussed at length in this magazine)—James Dean's lifestyle, and genre personalities who are unafraid to discuss their preferences. While it can be

argued that this last has little or no place in a Magazine of Mystery and Horror, it is certainly a part of show business, and deserves its share of coverage. As it is swept under the carpet practically everywhere else, *Scarlet Street* shows integrity by not ignoring this aspect of life. While it may also be argued by some that *Scarlet Street* overdoes their coverage of this subject, I say it's their magazine, and their choice, and there is certainly enough "on-topic" material in this wonderful periodical to satisfy everyone.

Duncan MacBeth  
Nutley, NJ

Some interesting points, Mr. Mac. Actually, we considered covering *THE SIMPSONS*, but were done in by the *Curse of Quarterly Publication*: the summer issue printed too early for us to get the material and the fall issue came out well after the mystery was solved. On the James Dean front, we try to schedule articles that reflect other articles in a given issue. (To do this, we use very shiny paper.) The Dean piece was supposed to tie in with several other pieces in *Scarlet Street* #17, but the article with the greatest horror content

*Continued on page 12*



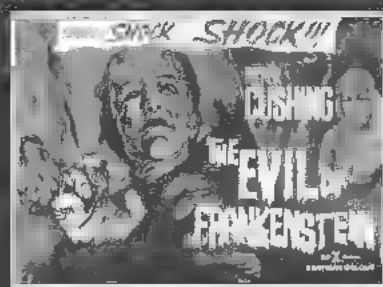
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## SCARLET LETTERS

*Continued from page 10*

(the influence of *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE* on such teen screamers as *I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF*) had to be dropped due to space limitations.

I read with great interest the letter in last issue's letters column criticizing the gay slant of some on your articles.

I, for one, love it. Being a gay man who is a rabid mystery and horror fan, I find it more than refreshing that a magazine like *Scarlet Street* is willing to cover the gay angle that is so often overlooked by other magazines. *Scarlet Street* fills a niche in the publishing world, and if people are upset with your coverage, well, perhaps they should find something else to read.

Speculating on the sexuality of a fictional character is hardly what I would call "irresponsible," especially when it concerns characters who have become cultural bywords, like Holmes and Watson. Is it insulting to interpret an artist's work as anything other than what they originally meant? The sex life of public figures is speculated on constantly, and Sherlock Holmes is as much a public figure as Tom Selleck, in my opinion.

Anyway, let me say that I eagerly consume every issue as soon as it arrives, and so do a lot of friends. (I keep encouraging them to get their own subscriptions, but . . .) I've found out about a lot of good movies and taken a second look at ones I've seen before, because of what I've read in *Scarlet Street*. Keep up the grand work!

Michael Cornett  
Takoma Park, MD

*If it is irresponsible to speculate, then we're in fine company: it was Nero Wolfe creator Rex Stout who once suggested that Watson was a woman! Thanks for the praise, Michael. Now, about these friends of yours . . .*

Let me congratulate you on your decision both to run and refute the homophobic letters which appeared in the last issue of *Scarlet Street*. I enjoy *SS* exactly as you prepare it; please never give in to narrow-minded pleas for self censorship.

As for the topic of monsters and homosexuals, I feel there is plenty to say. Not only have gay and lesbian artists repeatedly been drawn to work in the field, but the genre's overall narrative structure almost always figures some sort of monstrous sexual threat which invades the space of socially constructed

"normality." That this threat has often been depicted in Hollywood film as homosexual or bisexual should be obvious to anyone even remotely familiar with the genre. Whether some of your readers want to acknowledge it or not, the thrill of a monstrously queer sexuality is implicit within the genre's appeal, from lesbian vampires to each and every mad scientist's desire to make a man without the usual hassles of heterosexual intercourse.

What this "means" for gay and lesbian people living in 20th-century America is a complex and far-reaching question. While many gay and lesbian fans enjoy the sight of a "monster queer" attacking the repressive agents and agencies of a (hetero) sexist patriarchy, more often the confluence of monster and queer is primarily a homophobic one. (For a real right-wing horror show, check out 1981's *FEAR NO EVIL*, in which an effeminate teenage boy turns out to be the anti-Christ. See him kiss another naked boy in the showers! See the boy manifest female breasts! See the anti-Christ, in fabulous eye makeup and a sheer, swirling black cape-gown ensemble, destroyed by a laser-shooting crucifix!) However, while the endings of most traditional horror stories



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have been sexually conservative—eradicating their “monster queers” after allowing them full run for 90 minutes—things seem to be changing. Today’s monsters are valued precisely for their queer sexiness and romance; “normal” heterosexual couples and Van Helsing figures are slowly dwindling away.

While I ultimately feel that the American horror film has been instrumental in playing upon and perpetuating homophobic fears for decades, I also feel that acknowledging these undercurrents within the genre—as your magazine regularly does—is one of the best ways of combating such demonizing connotative practices. Keep up the good work!

I'd be interested in hearing from other readers about this subject via [benshoff@scf.usc.edu](mailto:benshoff@scf.usc.edu).

Harry M. Benshoff

Los Angeles, CA

That effeminate teenage boy in *FEAR NO EVIL* was played by Stefan Arngren, formerly a small adolescent boy in TV's *LAND OF THE GIANTS*.

Several important details were omitted in Lelia Loban's excellent article *NEW MASKS FOR JACK THE RIPPER* (SS #19).

Florence Elizabeth Chandler, wife of James Maybrick, “moved to the

States” for good reason: she was born in Mobile, Alabama.

Was she “possibly framed?” While Maybrick kept a mistress, Florence had an affair with a man 15 years younger than her husband, Alfred Brierley. Before Maybrick's death, Florence purchased a dozen flypapers from a chemist, and one of the housemaids saw, in Florence's bedroom, the papers soaking in a basin of water. Flypapers contained arsenic.

Between 1843 and 1955, 68 women were hanged in Britain, including 37 women poisoners.

Partly because Florence was an American, following her conviction for murder and date of execution, her sentence was commuted by the Home Secretary only three days before she was to be hanged. Pressure for her release came from President Grover Cleveland, and later from President William McKinley. It was only when Queen Victoria, who had opposed Florence's early release, died, did King Edward VII permit her release from a cell that had no bed, only a hammock, and a diet mainly of bread and gruel.

After 15 years of living in a hell on earth, Florence, escorted by the American ambassador, crossed into France to be reunited with her aged

mother, and then returned to her native country after a 20 year absence. Florence gave newspaper interviews and wrote a book, *My Fifteen Last Years*, telling her side but adding no new details. At age 55, in 1917, she settled in a small town in Connecticut, living in a wooden shack. While her identity was known to her neighbors, Florence, surrounded by cats, lived out her life in a state of personal neglect and squalor.

It was on 23 October, 1941, at the age of 76, more than a half century after her marriage, that Florence died. A wooden cross, bearing only her initials, marks her final resting place.

Syd Goldberg  
Philadelphia, PA

I have been a subscriber since issue #1 and I have enjoyed the articles and interviews immensely. But I was surprised by your article in *FRANKLY SCARLET*. I didn't know your articles were now political. I belong to a number of societies, each with a newsletter, and never are politics and religion brought into the discussion. If you are going to talk about them, at least take into account the other side's views as well. (The Contract on America happens to be the Contract with America.) That is the



kind of garbage you would read about in *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. If you didn't intend to have some balance in the article, then you should not have printed it.

Stephen M. Imburgia  
Webster, NY

*Richard Valley replies: The flaw in the argument, Stephen, is that FRANKLY SCARLET is not an article; it's an editorial, with the editor's point of view. As for the Gingrich Gang, I'm as much a part of America as the next guy and I certainly signed no contract with them. Believe me, I choose my business partners more carefully.*

I am writing this on what would have been Peter Cushing's 82nd birthday to express my great anger at what I feel to be Jonathan Malcolm Lampley's incredibly disloyal letter in SS #18 about the coverage of the death last year of Peter Cushing.

He litters his letter with the words "letdown," "disrespect," and "insult" when referring to what he believes was an inappropriate tribute in SS #16 to the life and work of one of our most beloved genre stars. Mr. Lampley professes to be disappointed by what *Scarlet Street* carried, despite his own admission that Cushing's death caught the magazine by surprise.

The British press was also caught by surprise, just as newspapers, magazines, TV stations, and radio channels are "caught by surprise" whenever a celebrity dies or a catastrophe occurs. In those circumstances, you have to do the very best you can.

In Britain, the national newspapers dusted off obituaries, added a few minor touches to bring them up to date, and dug out photographs from their files. Channel Four Television screened a worthless segment of *THE WORLD OF HAMMER*, which was no more than a hastily assembled collection of film clips linked by Oliver Reed's whispered voiceover.

And so it goes. None of the so-called "tributes" said anything new. They rehashed interviews from years before, trawled through the Hammer years, mentioned the Cushing/Lee partnership, the death of Helen Cushing, and Cushing's 23-year wait to join her. None of it was new.

Is this what Mr. Lampley wanted *Scarlet Street* to do—a tired, hackneyed rerun of everything which has ever been said in a thousand different magazines offering a "special feature" on the king of horror?

All I can say is hooray for Richard Valley. No mean writer himself, he

chose to let Peter Cushing's friends, colleagues, and admirers give their measure of the man. It was original, innovative, and unique. No such tribute appeared anywhere else in the English-speaking world (and believe me, I know).

For me, Peter Cushing will always be the actor who frightened me as a child and thrilled me as an adult. He was unique, he is irreplaceable, and the world will not see his like again.

Tony Earnshaw  
Huddersfield, Yorkshire  
England

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**245: MISSION HYDRA** (1966) Kirk Morris, Gordon Mitchell, Roland Lasafre, Leonthe Gnell. This never-before-on-video obscurity is certainly one of the rarest of all '60s sci-fi films. An alien spaceship from the planet Hydra lands on Earth and kidnaps a group of humans. Hibernating robots, aliens with incinerating rays, photon showers, a planet of ape-monsters, and a spaceship of skeletons are all featured. Tight, brisk, and miniskirt are the fashion for women for intergalactic travel here. An unusual combination of sci-fi, romance, action, and social comment. Color from 16mm. \$197

**VULCAN, SON OF JUPITER** (1962) Rod Flash Bush, Bella Cortez, Gordon Mitchell. Lots of horror and fantasy elements here as Rod faces his muscled and fight-off other-worldly monsters! The Greek gods from Mt. Olympus, lizard-like monster men, and strange underground creatures are featured in this incredibly rare sword and sandal spectacular. No classic, but good fun with tons of action sequences. Color, from 16mm. \$581

**THE INTRUDER** (1933) Monte Blue, Lila Lee, Gwynn Lee, Mischa Aust. A grisly murder is committed on board a cruise ship. Before an investigation can really get started, the ship is wrecked in a storm, and the survivors find themselves shipwrecked on a mysterious (and we do mean mysterious) jungle island. The survivors are terrorized by weird sounds from the jungle and are horrified when they discover a cave full of skeletons. After another murder occurs, several of the survivors flee into the jungle only to encounter a fanatical wild man and a tiler gorilla! This is easily one of the most fantastic and intriguing of all the Forgotten Horror thrillers. \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From 16mm. FH62

**INQUISITION** (1978) Paul Naschy, Daniela Giordano, Juan Gallardo. Naschy is a 16th century witch hunting judge. He falls in love with the daughter of a warlock whom he sentenced to death. She makes a pact with Satan and soon Naschy finds himself accused of witchcraft. This is a violent film with many brutal torture scenes, quite beyond limits like BLOODY PIT OF HORROR. Not recommended for the squeamish or persons with children in the household. Rated "R" for violence and nudity. Color from 35mm. H229

**DAMAGED LIVES\*** (1933) Diane Simler, Lyman Williams, George Irving, Jason Robards. One of the most sought-after of all early exploitation classics is now on video! A guy breaks a date with his fiancée and finds himself having an affair with another woman. The next day he confesses everything to his beloved. There's just one problem: the woman he slept with had V.D. When the woman confronts him with this fact, he refuses to believe her. So with typical '30s female screen logic—she shoots herself. A camp classic! This is one to show your friends on bag night. From 16mm. X086

## DAMAGED LIVES



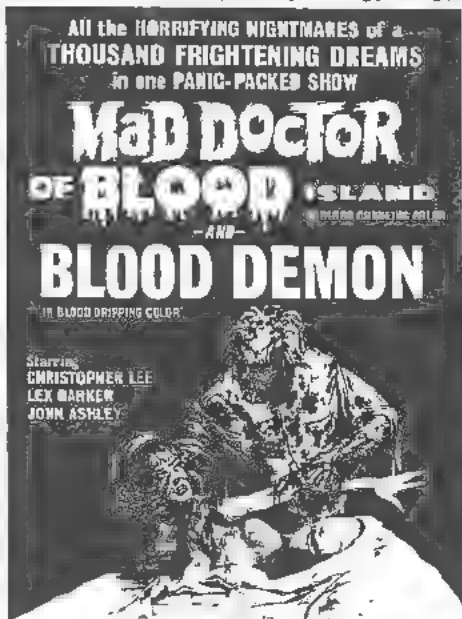
**ARABIAN ADVENTURE\*** (1979) Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Milo O'Shea, Oliver Tobias, Mickey Rooney. Now this is a great little movie. Lee plays an evil magician who seeks to become all powerful by obtaining a magical rock. A young peasant boy and a handsome prince oppose him and finally triumph over him. This wonderful sword and sorcery fantasy features flying carpets, a mischievous genie, mechanical dragon monsters, and many other fantastical elements. The climax features a battle in the sky, filled with fighters on flying carpets. Lee is outstanding and heads a tremendous cast. Very entertaining and great for the whole family. You'll watch this again and again, don't miss it. Color 16mm. \$588

**IVY LEAGUE KILLERS** (1962) Don Boriscento, Barbara Brooker. A totally forgotten minor gem that's a must for all J.D. collectors. A group of rich, spoiled teenagers find themselves at odds with a ruthless motorcycle gang that's willing to kill on the side. One thing leads to another, finally culminating in robbery, violence, and murder. Gritty yet sincere. Try finding this in any J.D. reference book. First time on video. From 16mm. J336

**DECOY FOR TERROR** (1968) Bill Kinin, Neil Sedaka, Jean Christopher. A real graveyard shift favorite. Kinin plays a looney-tunes artist who has trouble making his models stand still. His brilliant solution is to murder them, then store their bodies in a meat locker. Cheap and sleazy, yet engrossing. Sedaka (how'd he get in this thing?) sings a number of toe-tappers. Also: "Playin' Killer." Not released here until 1970. Color, from 16mm. H223

**TNT JACKSON** (1974) Jeanne Bell, Stan Shaw, Pat Anderson, Ken Metcalf. A well-made Filipino martial arts thriller with a lot of kick. Former playmate Bell plays a karate expert who looks the hell out of anyone who tries to prevent her from finding her lost brother. One eye-opening scene has her taking on a room full of thugs while dressed only in panties (very small panties). Definitely rated "R" for nudity, violence, and language. Color, from 16mm. KF07





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LIVING and LUSTING for BIZARRE PLEASURES**  
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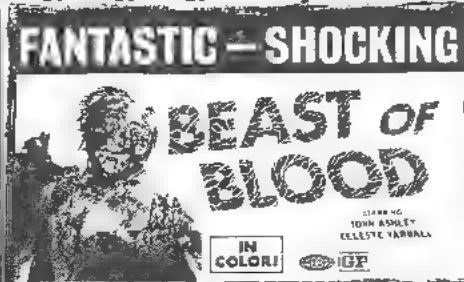
**MAD DOCTOR OF BLOOD ISLAND\*** (1966) John Ashley, Angelique Pettyjohn, Ronald Ramsey. Great '60s drive-in fun about a mad scientist who conducts strange experiments dealing with eternal youth. However, his guinea pig—his illicit lover's hubby—turns into a hideous green monster and eventually causes the laboratory to go up in flames. An interesting combination of Frankenstein, Dr. Moreau, and zombie motifs. In some theaters, customers were given "green blood" (colored water) during a special prologue and told it was an aphrodisiac. Directed by Eddie Romero. Color from 16mm. H220

**INVINCIBLE BROTHERS MACISTE** (1965) Richard Lloyd, Tony Freeman, Anthony Steffen, Ursula Davis, Claudia Lange. First time on video. A mysterious underground queen orders her strange horde of leopard-men to kidnap the fiancée of a prince—whom she actually loves—hoping to draw him to her underground kingdom. The Maciste brothers come to the aid of the prince and the two lovers are eventually reunited, but not after a massive earthquake ravages the underground kingdom of the evil queen. Color from 16mm. SSB3

**KING OF KONG ISLAND** (1968) Brad Harris, Marc Lawrence. A group of mad scientists journey to Kong Island where they implant receptors into the brains of the local gorilla citizenry. Their nefarious scheme is to conquer the world with an army of Kongs! The scientists are challenged by the mighty ape "King" an actual descendant of the original King Kong. A real bizarre movie. To say the least. Not released here until 77. Color 16mm. S198

**FORTRESS OF THE DEAD** (1955) John Hackett, Conrad Perkhams, Ana Corita. An incredibly rare ghost thriller not listed in any of the major reference books. The lone survivor of a blown-out WWII bunker at Corregidor returns to the Philippines twenty years later. There he finds himself haunted by the spectre of his former battalion. His guilt eventually draws him to the sealed up bunker where the ghosts of his dead comrades seem to call for him. This is a very eerie and spine-tingling supernatural thriller that will make you want to leave the lights on. Highly recommended. From 16mm. H219

**THE BLANCHEVILLE MONSTER\*** (1962, aka HORROR) Gerard Tichy, Leo Anchowitz, Joan Mills, Iran Eory, Richard Davis, Helge Line. A beautiful young girl—daughter of a half-mad count—fears that her ancient castle's superstition will come true; namely, that her life will be sacrificed to fulfill an ancient family legend. She later finds herself buried prematurely in a cataleptic state by her horribly disfigured father. The dubbing is somewhat awkward, but the sets are beautiful and the music is nice and sinister. Overall very atmospheric. This is a much requested title. From 16mm. H217



**BEAST OF BLOOD\*** (1970 aka BEAST OF THE DEAD) John Ashley, Celeste Yarnall, Eddie Garcia. A direct sequel to MAD DOCTOR OF BLOOD ISLAND. The maniacal Dr. Jorco, now horribly disfigured, kidnaps a female reporter for use in his experiments. He eventually turns loose a headless monster (with green blood, no less) on the film's heroine. Really, really wacky. When first released theatrically, "survivals kits" containing barf bags were thoughtfully handed out to all moaning theatre patrons. Color, from 16mm. H221

**HYENA OF LONDON** (1964) Bernard Price, Diana Martin, Tony Kendall, Anthony Wright. This is an extremely interesting Edgar Wallace horror-chiller with sci-fi elements. A mad professor studying the "symptoms of evil" has his assistant inject the liquid from the brain of a dead killer into his own brain. The results are disastrous as the professor is transformed into a stark raving maniac himself. One of the better Wallace thrillers of the 1960s. From 16mm. EW48

**TIMELOCK** (1967) Robert Beatty, Betty McDowall, Lee Patterson. A real nail biter! A banker's son is accidentally locked in an air-tight vault. The vault is pre-set to open at 9am Monday—63 hours away. It's a life-and-death race against time to rescue the boy before he suffocates in this well-made British thriller that keeps you on the edge of your seat. \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From a nice 16mm original print. M253

**MURDER AT DAWN** (1932) Jack Mulhall, Josephine Dunn, Mecha Auer. Mulhall and Dunn are engaged to be married. They go to the mysterious mountain hideaway of Dunn's father—an eccentric professor—for consent to their marriage plans. The professor has been working on a death ray that uses power developed from sunlight. Lots of murders and mysterious goings-on ensue, complete with trap doors, faces at windows, falling bodies, and other weird happenings. The climactic scene featuring the death ray was created by electrical special effects wizard, Kenneth Strickland. Sounds better than it really is, but still quite interesting and definitely worth a look. \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From 16mm. FHS1

**NO GREATER SIN\*** (1942) Leon Ames, Luana Walters, John Gallaudet, George Taggart, Guy Usher. This Coffin. Another "lost" exploitation bummer has finally floated to the surface. A concerned health official does everything he can to stop the spread of venereal disease by the town's prostitutes. Will he succeed? Possibly the greatest cast ever assembled for one of these old, rock-bottom exploitation quickies. Like its peers, the film tries hard to be sincere, but in the end produces mainly emms and chuckles. Known in Great Britain as SOCIAL ENEMY NUMBER ONE. Produced by that bastion of good film-making, University Film Products. From 16mm. X085



**KISS OF THE TARANTULA\*** (1972) Eric Mason, Suzanne Ling, Pat London, Herman Wallner. Good old fashioned 70s drive-in shock! A wacky teenage girl discovers her bitchy stepmother is cheating on her dad (with dad's brother, no less!). Seeking revenge for Pop, she unleashes her pet tarantula into stepmom's bedroom. Daughter then goes over the deep end and starts using them against other "enemies" as well. The tarantula scene in lover's lane is a knockout. If spiders bother you, don't watch this movie. Over the top but lots of fun and not easily forgotten. Color, from 16mm. H224

**KILMA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE** (1975) Eva Miller, Frank Branz, Claudia Gray. A sailor escapes from a shipwreck on pirates, only to find himself stranded on a jungle island witnessing a battle between a band of jungle natives and a tribe of female amazon warriors. Later, the sailor befriends the Amazon queen after saving her from a deadly boa constrictor. However, befriending him is a big time tribal no-no. There's plenty of jungle and pirate thrills in this hard-to-find action piece. Be prepared for some of the most gorgeous, scantily clad amazon women you'll ever see. Color from 16mm. J053

**SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS\*** (1990) Terry-Thomas, Alastair Sim, Ian Carmichael, Janette Scott. This movie's a scoundrel Carmichael is a total nerd, a complete loser. He's scorned by his employees, cheated by waiters and cab drivers, swindled by crooked car salesman, and—even worse—ridiculed at tennis in front of the lady he loves by a smug-looking ladies' man. Then he finds the solution: a school for scoundrels. It's a school to sharpen up men who consistently find themselves lowest on the totem-pole of life. What follows after his "graduation" is a riot. British comedies don't get any better. While only marginally in the Simlar Cinema spectrum, we just couldn't resist releasing this great title. Recommended. \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. 16mm. M255



**For more incredible new releases, go on to the next page**



## 18



**NO GREATER SIN** (1942) Leon Arroya, Luana Walters, John Galsaudel, Guy Usher, Tris Coffin. Another "lost" exploitation badie has finally floated to the surface. A concerned health official does everything he can to stop the spread of venereal disease by the town's prostitutes. Will he succeed? A campy morsel. From 16mm. X085

**A FIG LEAF FOR EVE** (1944 aka **DESIRABLE LADY**) Jan Wiley, Phil Warren, Betty Blythe. An exotic dancer is thrown in the slammer for performing a risqué dance in public. Later, she discovers her boss set up the raid for publicity! First time on video. From 16mm. X090



Melba Linn, Bryan Walsh  
Gloria, Ed Kagan, Raymond Cullen  
as The Southern Belle from  
Van Sweringen Trust Estates

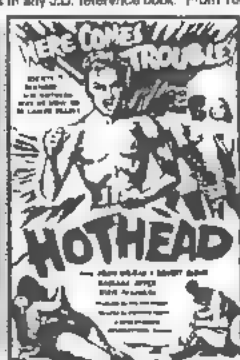
Ripping the lid from a vicious phase of American life. Showing with an unusual drama the hidden sidelights of the great city!

## JUVENILE SCHLOCK

**MICKEY** (1948) Los Butler, Bill Goodwin, Irene Hervey, John Sutton, Rose Hobart, Skip Homeier. Early, sometimes humorous early teenage movie about a young teenager who's a source of constant embarrassment to her widower father. She eventually straightens out and becomes a gorgeous young gal, helping Dad along the way. Kind of a '40s version of *GIDGET*. Color, 16mm. J538

**SO EVIL, SO YOUNG** (1957) Jill Ireland, John Charlesworth, Ellen Pollock, John Longden. A juvenile girl is framed as an accomplice in a robbery. She's sent to a reform school for girls where she falls victim to the cruel temperament of the sadistic chief wardress. A real J.D. rarity that's first time on video. Color from 16mm. J537

**IVY LEAGUE KILLERS** (1962) Don Borisenko, Barbara Bricker. A totally forgotten minor J.D. gem. A group of rich teenagers find themselves up against a ruthless motorcycle gang. One thing leads to another, finally culminating in robbery and murder. Grilly, yet sincere. Try finding this in any J.D. reference book. From 16mm. J538



**HOTHEAD** (1963) John Delgar, Robert Glenn, Barbara Joyce. A must-see for all J.D. collectors. A young teenage punk is fired from his job for stealing. A gorgeous young hooker gets involved with a runaway husband. Ultimately, they all cross paths in this very unusual and very engrossing film. Prostitution, alcoholism, cool cars, body builders, dancing teenage girls, fist-fights, and even madness are all part of this incredible J.D. rarity. A real find! From 16mm. J539

## JUNGLE THRILLS

**KING OF THE WILD** (1931) Boris Karloff, Walter Miller, Norm Lane, Dorothy Christy. Boris plays a villainous shark in this exciting Mescal serial thriller that's filled with menacing tigers, volcanoes, and other jungle thrills. From 16mm. 12 chapter serial, two tapes, \$24.95 plus \$2.06 for packaging, handling, and postage. J049

**BRIDES OF SULL** (1934) Adelina Moreno, Eduardo Castro, Gregoria Tieman. Two island lovers, both of opposing religions, fall in love and flee to a remote island. Warriors from the girls' tribe track them down and trouble follows. From 16mm. J050

**PERILS OF THE JUNGLE** (1951) Clyde Beatty, Stanley Farrar, Phyllis Coates. This good old fashioned "B" jungle thriller has famed African hunter Beatty tracking down Nubian lions in the Congo jungle. Plenty of hair-raising back-bush excitement. From 16mm. J051

**WALK INTO HELL** (1957) Cripes Rafferty, Françoise Christopher, Reginald Ulye. An Australian official of New Guinea is ordered to investigate an odd discovery in the wild jungle interior. When he and his party are captured by savages, he effects their liberation by having a lady doctor cure the jungle chieftain's children. Color, 16mm. J052

**KILMA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE** (1975) Eva Miller, Frank Bruns, Claudio Gray. A shipwrecked sailor witnesses a battle between natives and female Amazon warriors. Later, the sailor befriends the Amazon queen of the after saving her from a boa constrictor. Lots of jungle thrills and scantily-clad Amazon gals. Color from 16mm. J053

## EDGAR & BRYAN WALLACE



**RETURN OF THE FROG** (1938 aka **Nobody Home**) Sonnie Hale, Wilfred Lawson, Louise Henry. An ultra-rare British Edgar Wallace thriller. The ex-partner of a master criminal is protected by Scotland Yard. The criminal—a master of disguise—tracks him down and kills him anyway in spite of the Yard's efforts. EW18

**HYENA OF LONDON** (1954) Bernard Price, Diana Martin, Tony Kendall, Anthony Wright. This is an extremely interesting Edgar Wallace horror chiller with sci-fi elements. A mad professor, studying the symptoms of evil, injects liquid from the brain of a dead killer into his own brain and becomes a maniac himself. 16mm. EW18

**ROOM 13** (1964) Joachim Fuchsberger, Karin Dor, Richard Haubler. A robbery involving gold and bank notes eventually leads to the blackmail of a government official. It all leads to a forsaken castle and a nightclub room known as "number 13." From 16mm. EW17

**CURSE OF THE HIDDEN VAULT** (1964) Judith Dornay, Harold Lieb. The aged owner of an old gambling casino dies, making a young girl heir to his amassed fortune that lies hidden in a secret tomb. Underworld members become the victims of greed—and the dread secret of the mysterious vault. From 16mm. EW16

## FORGOTTEN HORRORS

**MURDER AT DAWN** (1932) Jack Mithell, Josephine Dunn, Mischa Auer. In a mysterious mountain hideaway, an mad professor works on a death ray! Lots of murders and mysterious goings-on ensue. complete with trap doors, faces at windows, falling bodies, etc. Special effects by electrical wizard Kenneth Strickfaden. 16mm. FH51

**GANGSTERS OF THE SEA** (1932 aka **OUT OF SINGAPORE**) Noah Beery, Dorothy Burgess, Miriam Seeger, Montagu Love. Strange happenings as the captain of a ship falls ill with some strange disease (he's actually been poisoned). A gang of thugs then tries to take over the ship. A very, very explosive climax. From 16mm. FH52

**THE INTRUDER** (1933) Monte Blue, Lila Lee, Gwenn Lee, Mischa Auer. A grisly murder is committed on board a cruise ship just before it goes down in a storm. The survivors end on a mysterious jungle island where they encounter a fanatical wild man, a killer gorilla, and a cave full of skeletons! Bizarre. Recommended. From 16mm. FH53

**CAPTURED IN CHINATOWN** (1935) Charles Delaney, Marlon Shilling. A "yellow peril" thriller. A bloody feud between two Chinese families leads to mystery and murder. Although this is not a new release, it is now upgraded from a beautiful 16mm original print. FH27



## MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-FILM NOIR

PLEASE NOTE: All titles in this section are just \$12.95, plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

**NEVER TOO LATE** (1935) Richard Talmadge. Thelma White, Robert Frazer, Mildred Harris. A wild Talmadge action film involving a stolen necklace and a gang of ruthless jewel thieves. Watch for the rooftop race with the crooks at the film's hair-raising climax. Plenty of bruises and abrasions. A Reliable Pictures release. 16mm. M242

**STEP ON IT** (1936) Richard Talmadge, Lois Wilde, Roger Williams. An action packed Talmadge vehicle with Richard playing a cop-fired from the force—who then solves a series of truck holdups. Tons of heliopsis. Released by Reliable Pictures. From 16mm. M243

**IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED, BUT IT DID** (1936) Reginald Denny, Jack La Rue, Evelyn Brent, Inez Courtney. Murder-mystery playwright tries to solve the puzzling case of his murdered producer. A well-done little Chesterfield whodunit. From 16mm. M244

**GO GET 'EM HAINES** (1936) Bill Boyd, Sheila Terry, Eleanor Hurs, Leroy Mason. A sea-faring murder mystery with Boyd (Hopalong Cassidy) giving up his cowboy boots to play a reporter who tries to solve the mystery of a passenger murdered during a play at sea. Yes, there is a scene where the lights go out. EEE. From 16mm. M246

**THE DRAG-NET** (1938) Rod La Rocque, Marian Nixon, Betsy Compson, Jack Adair. A very rare and very intriguing crime drama produced by Edgar Rice Burroughs. La Rocque plays a young playboy who takes a job as an assistant D.A. He then finds himself up against a tough crime boss and his gang, as well as being all odds with the local newspaper. Recommended. From 16mm. M248

**THE AVENGING HAND** (1938) Noah Berry, Kathleen Kelly, Louis Borrell, James Harcourt. Berry went abroad to star in this very rare British thriller. A number of "guests" in a hotel are actually criminals searching for a stash of hidden loot. From 16mm. M247

**FLYING FISTS** (1937) Herman Brix, Jeanne Marie, Fuzzy Knight, Farrell Mac Donald, Gullin Williams, Dolores Jones. This is a nifty little action thriller with Brix as a lumberjack who floors the ex-heavyweight champ. He's brought into the fight game where he's publicized as the most ruthless fighter in the game. Is a fixed fight in the making? Yes. Made by Sam Katzman's Victory Pictures. From 16mm. M248



**DESPERATE CARGO** (1941) Ralph Byrd, Carol Hughes, Jack Mithell. A gang of criminals hijacks a giant clipper on which two girls are trying to return to the United States. Byrd comes to the rescue in this exciting little PRC thriller. From 16mm. M249

**THEY MADE ME A KILLER** (1948) Robert Lowery, Barbara Britton, Frank Albertson, Lola Lane, James Bush, Edmund MacDonald. In this action-melodrama from Paramount's Pine-Thomas factory, an innocent man (Lowery) is accused of robbery and murder charges. To the rescue comes a determined young girl. From 16mm. M254

**MAN ON THE LEDGE** (1955) Cameron Mitchell, William Gargan, Sylvia Sydney, Vera Miles. A mentally and emotionally disturbed young man, determined to end his life, contemplates suicide for fourteen hours on a high ledge. A suspenseful and exciting film. 16mm. M251

**TIMELOCK** (1957) Robert Beatty, Betty McDowell, Lee Patterson. A banker's son is accidentally locked in an air-tight vault that's not set to open again for over 99 hours. It's a life-and-death race against time to save the boy's life in this great British thriller. From 16mm. M253

**TREAD SOFTLY, STRANGER** (1958) Diana Dors, Terence Morgan, George Baker. This is an outstanding British crime drama about a beautiful, hard-boiled schemer who causes two brothers to rob and murder to win her favor. Her sudden decision to reform comes too late. A really well-made, solid production. From 16mm. M254

**SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS** (1960) Terry-Thomas, Alanis Sore, Ian Carmichael. This movie's a scream! A total loser finds a solution to all his problems in life. It's a school for scoundrels that sharpens up men who consider only themselves lowest on the totem-pole of life. Highly recommended. From 16mm. M256

## MARTIAL ARTS THRILLERS

**TNT JACKSON** (1974) Jeanne Bell, Stan Shaw, Pat Anderson, Ken Metcalfe. Former playmate Bell plays a karate expert who kicks the butt out of anyone who tries to prevent her from finding her lost brother. One eye-opening scene has her taking on a room full of thugs while dressed only in panties. Definitely rated "R." Color, from 16mm. KP07

**BRUCE LEE: THE MAN, THE MYTH** (1977) Bruce L. This action bio concerns the saga of Bruce Lee, starting with his humble beginnings in Hong Kong. It follows his life to America and to his eventual stardom as a martial arts superstar. Color, 16mm. KP06

**KUNG FU OF EIGHT DRUNKARDS** (1977) Lee Yung. A very unusual Kung Fu movie. A group of bawling, Cheng dynasty warriors use an unusual martial arts technique that gives them the appearance of being drunk. Color, from 35mm. KP08

**THE TONG FATHER** (1978) Sammy Chung. The title character is a merciless oriental crime boss who heads a Chinese opium ring. A martial arts agent sets out to bring him in. Color from 35mm. KP09

# the NEWS HOUND

The Hound brings down the curtain on his Fifth Year of Fear on *Scarlet Street* with a bushel of bulletins fairly bursting at the seams. This could get messy...

BATMAN IV has already begun its nocturnal flight to the screen. BATMAN FOREVER director Joel Schumacher and screenwriter Akiva Goldsman are already pounding out the plot. Shooting is due to start next fall for a projected summer 1997 release. Val Kilmer and Chris O'Donnell will return in their stylish rubber *shmattes*, doing battle this time with archfiends Mr. Freeze and Poison Ivy. On the producers' wish list to portray the aforementioned foes are Patrick Stewart and Demi Moore. (Ms. Moore, presumably, will play the latter baddie and drop a few leaves on the way.) Incidentally, these are the very same villainous felons that our very own editor suggested to Mr. Schumacher [interviewed last issue] when he asked for *Scarlet Street's* input. Mr. S, who's currently shooting John Grisham's *A TIME TO KILL* with Sandra Bullock and Samuel L. Jackson, obviously recognizes a sterling source of creative advice when he sees one. Call back any time!

While you're waiting for the next bat-signal, report to the local cinema to sample these crisp fall releases: *NICK OF TIME* features erstwhile crossdresser Johnny Depp caught in a Hitchcockian snare of blackmail and murder... Brand-new Bond Pierce Brosnan battles an evil mastermind, a killer satellite, and Famke Janssen's muscular thighs in *GOLDENEYE*... Robin Williams plays a most dangerous game when he rolls the dice in *JUMANJI*... December offerings include the time-travel thriller *TWELVE MONKEYS* with Bruce Willis and Brad Pitt; south-of-the-border vampire actioner *FROM DUSK TILL DAWN*; Mel Brooks' batty spoof *DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT* (starring

Leslie Nielsen and *WINGS* star Steven Weber, who most recently camped it up with Captain Picard in the gay comedy *JEFFREY*); and the long-overdue *MARY REILLY*, which finally comes out of Hyding for the holidays.

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS, a followup to John Landis' 1981 horror comedy classic *AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*, is in development at TriStar. The new

last part up ) No word yet on casting and/or choreography.

"Are we not men?" growled Bela Lugosi in the original 1933 *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS*. That question was finally answered a few months ago by Marlon Brando while shooting the current remake: "We are dolphins!" According to the *New York Daily News*, the already troubled set of New Line's summer '96 release *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU* be-

came even more chaotic when Brando told the director that he wanted to play the title role dressed as a porpoise. The producers, already reeling from the departures of director Richard Stanley and actor Rob Morrow, not to mention delays caused by some nasty Australian weather, eventually coaxed the hugely creative Brando toward a less revisionist interpretation. (Perhaps they promised to star him in a remake of *THE INCREDIBLE MR. LIMPET*.) Meanwhile, John Frankenheimer has picked up the directorial reins; let's hope the rest of his cast, which includes Val Kilmer, Fairuza Balk, and Ron (The Beast) Perlman, leave the costume choices to the pros.

News of other cinematic encores now in production or rolling soon: After escaping from New York, pumped-up 21st-century tough guy Snake Plisskin (Kurt Russell) must now *ESCAPE FROM L. A.* (Actually, he could just stand there and wait to be shook or washed out.) John Carpenter starts the sequel to his 1981 cult fave in

January... Wes Craven's remake of *THE HAUNTING* is still on the drawing (creaking?) boards for a fall start, though no cast has yet been announced... Glenn Close needn't doff that Norma Desmond turban when she plays the puppy-hating Cruella De Vil in John Hughes' live-action Disney production of *101*



Mel Brooks' *DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT* stars Leslie Nielsen as the Count and Steven Weber as his nemesis.

film will pick up some 20 years after the events of the first flick. Jenny Agutter's character has given birth to a pouncing baby girl, fathered by David Naughton's character (the werewolf of the original piece). An unsuspecting American in Paris falls in love with the 20-year-old lycanthropic lass and the furry fun begins, amid a lush Gershwin score! (Okay, okay...we made that

*Continued on page 22*



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# MOMMY DEAREST

**P**atty McCormack, that sweet, adorable little murdering kiddie from *THE BAD SEED* (1956) is back, and this time she's definitely on the other side of the mother and child reunion.

Patty's just as bad, though. Maybe badder.

McCormack stars in *MOMMY*, a direct-to-video shocker from Eagle Entertainment, and she has an impressive roster of names, both in front of and behind the camera, to lend her a blood-smeared hand. Of greatest interest to mystery fans is the presence of Mickey Spillane, creator of Mike Hammer, in an acting role. He's joined by such noted genre names as Jason Miller (1973's *THE EXORCIST*),

Majel Barrett (*STAR TREK*), and Brinke Stevens (1991's *HAUNTING FEAR*).

Behind the camera is writer/director Max Alan Collins, best known as the author of several historical detective thrillers and winner of two Shamus Awards from the Private Eye Writers of America. Collins is also the former writer of the famed Dick Tracy comic strip, and, with Spillane, creator of the comic-book *Mickey Spillane's Mike Danger*, who bears more than a passing resemblance to Hammer.

Spillane believes low-budget, straight-to-video releases will be a boon to filmmaking. "It's the paperback original of the movie industry," he enthuses.



Patty McCormack and Mickey Spillane star in *MOMMY*.

*MOMMY* represents Patty McCormack's first return to outright screen villainy since *THE BAD SEED*. Scarlet Streeters can catch her (before she catches you) in video stores this November.

—Drew Sullivan



Colin Gray and Paul Popowich are the latest actors to play the Hardy Boys, Frank and Joe.

## NEWS HOUND

*Continued from page 20*

**DALMATIANS** . . . Not to be outdone in the cartoon villainess department, Sigourney Weaver will appear in the dual role of evil queen and apple-pickin' witch in PolyGram's *SNOW WHITE*.

More new features before the cameras: **REALLY BIG BUGS** are terrorizing teens in Malibu. (Good God, another reason to leave California!) Adam Rifkin of *BARB WIRE* directs the invasion . . . Director Stuart Gordon (*RE-ANIMATOR*) turns from Lovecraft to spacecraft with the sci-

fi comedy *SPACE TRUCKERS*, now shooting in Ireland with Dennis Hopper and Stephen Dorff . . . A gypsy puts a curse on a corrupt lawyer, leaving the attorney somewhat at a loss for weight in Tom (CHILD'S PLAY) Holland's *THINNER*, adapted from the novel by Richard Bachmann, alias Stephen King . . . The mysterious Nevada Air Force base known to UFO devotees as AREA 51 is the subject of a brand new thriller written by Mike Gray (*CHINA SYNDROME*) and directed by Robert (son of John) Carradine. (It's the X-FILES influence.)

Production starts in January on *THE CORPSE BRIDE*, the first feature from Tim Burton's new San Francisco-based animation studio. It's a cheerful comic fable about a young man and his dead fiancée, rendered in stop-motion à la *THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS* . . . The occasionally overexposed Drew Barrymore enlivens Dimension Films' horror spoof *SCARY MOVIE*, due to roll this spring . . . A springtime start is also planned for

director James Cameron's next big project, *PLANET ICE*. It's an underwater epic in the vein of his 1989 nail-biter *THE ABYSS*.

Paramount's long-planned adaptation of Lee Falk's comic strip *THE PHANTOM* is finally underway, with Jeffrey Boam (*INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE*) writing the script and intense young Billy Zane filling the purple tights of "The Ghost Who Walks." The 1930s-set adventure is scheduled for a summer '96 release . . . Also aiming for next-summer showings are *SPY HARD*, an *AIRPLANE*-style action spoof starring (who else?) Leslie Nielsen; the whirlwind drama *TWISTER* starring Bill Paxton; the remake of *DIABOLIQUE* starring Sharon Stone; Disney's animated musical *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* featuring that singing, swinging, bell-ringing Quasimodo (voiced by the talented Tom Hulce); and the rival alien invasion flicks *MARS ATTACKS!* and *INDEPENDENCE DAY*.

Keep that ray gun handy. There are still more alien visitors on the way: Charlie Sheen plays an astronomer (it's called "casting against

*Continued on page 24*



# DAMNED AGAIN!

Article and Interviews  
by  
Robert Sokol  
and Sean Farrell

This year's remake of 1960's *THE VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, directed by John Carpenter, was a faithful and well-made adaptation that didn't deserve its quick demise at the box office. However, one can now enjoy "the eyes that paralyze" on laserdisc, courtesy of MCA/Universal.

The film is basically an update of the original, itself based on the John Wyndham book *The Midwich Cuckoos* (1957). Starring Christopher Reeve, Kirstie Alley, and Mark Hamill, the new film takes off when a superior alien race implants their young in the wombs of human women in the small town of Midwich. These "alienated" children, with their distinctive platinum hair and

glowing, soulless eyes, become a threat not only to the townspeople, but to the entire world.

Having remade *THE THING* in 1982, director Carpenter is no newcomer to retreads, but, as he admits, "It's tricky. You have to be real careful how you do it. *THE THING*, that was really a classic, but to me, *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* wasn't. I've watched it several times and it's good but not great, so there was a little room to play in that one. You couldn't even say the word pregnant back then! There's always something you want to bring to a story that's new, and we were dealing with a couple of new issues we've woven in. I think it all works pretty well."

Carpenter's version disposes with the cold war mentality of its predecessor in favor of a theme concerning the indifference to violence that afflicts the younger generation. "What happens when your child can kill you and have no feelings?" Carpenter muses. "All you have to do is look around today's streets."

Other changes involved making one of the children, David, (Thomas Dekker, in the role originally played by Martin Stephens) more sympathetic. Carpenter describes him as being "worthy of redemption. He actually begins to develop some feelings. And we've split the George Sanders character

*Continued on page 24*

© 1985 Universal City Studios Inc. Photo: Industrial Light & Magic



## DAMNED AGAIN!

Continued from page 23

between a man and a woman, bringing in the female side a lot more."

In addition to slicing up an original lead as if he were an amoeba, the new *VILLAGE* creates a new one in the form of the Reverend George Miller, Midwich's town minister, played by Mark Hamill. "There was a man of the cloth in the first one, but we expanded the part a little bit, changed it a little bit," Carpenter confirms. "It's basically a new character; that's true."

Best known as Luke Skywalker in the *STAR WARS* trilogy, Hamill, in recent years, has proven a big hit with comics fans by virtue of his appearance as the Trickster on TV's *THE FLASH*, and by providing the voices of the Joker on the acclaimed *BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES* and the Hobgoblin on *SPIDER-MAN*. Hamill agrees with Carpenter that *VILLAGE* was due for a remake.

"People remember the premise. Whenever you say *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, they sometimes don't remember the film, but they remember the premise so well. I guess empowerment of children is a strong enough theme that it resonates with everyone. I mean, any kid who wants to stare hard at his parent and said parent then jumps off the roof . . ."

Hamill was impressed with his young costars. "Those kids, when they got them all lined up in the monochromatic outfits and the peroxided hair—they were just breathtaking, all of them. A kid can go from pretending to reality so quickly. It's a little unnerving to see them deadpan that 'I saw what you did' type dialogue and then instantly slip out of it and argue over who gets the last Tic Tac."

Asked what it was like to handle a large cast of children, Carpenter responds with a chuckle:



Mark Hamill is a Midwich clergyman who does a little hunting on the side—for alien children!

"Well, I had to deal with nine of them! Nine, count 'em, nine. Not all of them having lines, but some having pages of dialogue. They did great. Very quickly, they understood the script. I became this extended father-figure. I have a kid of my own, but I'm not really used to that many. It was fascinating, really fascinating."

"There are basically two leads and we cast them first. The rest were chosen based simply on looks. We tried to make them look like brothers and sisters. Like the same person, only duplicated."

Apparently, the spirit of Ed Wood not only lives on, it's thriving, since Hamill points out that Carpenter's effort to obtain the right look for the *DAMNED* kids even went so far as a sex change. "They had a couple of local girls with their hair cut short playing boys. They're at that androgynous age where you really can't tell."

With such films to his credit as *HALLOWEEN* (1978), *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* (1981), and *BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA*

(1986), Carpenter's impressive body of work spans both the sci-fi and horror genres. Yet he is a big fan of old movies, naming Howard Hawks as his favorite director. "When I started, I wanted to do Westerns, crime thrillers, detective thrillers, love stories, musicals. I always wanted to do all that stuff, but you get typecast and pigeonholed in a certain area. Still, it's a wonderful area. It's been very good to me."

"I watch old films. Love old movies. Luis Buñel, Howard Hawks, John Ford, Orson Welles—those are classics. My son makes me watch the modern stuff."

As a director of "the modern stuff," Carpenter often depends on state of the art special effects, such as ILM's impressive—yet subtle—contributions to the new *VILLAGE*. Yet he doesn't think the P/X trend of "bigger is better" is bad.

"It's a natural result of where technology is leading. You see it all the time. Look how quickly morphing has become a cliché. As digital computer technology gets stronger and cheaper, it's going to be everywhere. I will say, however, that audiences still like to go and see a story. I think effects are like everything else, a tool."

In almost all of his 17 films, Carpenter has relied on a stock company of actors and production people that calls to mind Roger Corman's operation in its heyday. Actor Buck Flower, who plays the drunken school custodian Carlton in *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, has also appeared in Carpenter's *THE FOG* (1980), *STARMAN* (1984), *THEY LIVE* (1988), *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK*, and *BODY BAGS* (1993, starring Hamill).

"It's nice to work with people you know," Carpenter says. "You have a shorthand and it makes things easier. It's very comfortable that way."



## NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 22

type") who discovers an alien invasion plan in *SHOCKWAVE* . . . A soldier-for-hire discovers a government plot to entrap visiting ETs and use them for nasty experiments (can't they stick to using us unsuspecting citizens?) in producer Debra Hill's *RUBICON* . . . Former sitcom sweat-

hog John Travolta gains otherworldly powers following an alien encounter (with Quentin Tarantino, perhaps?) in *PHENOMENON* . . . Four young pals, en route to the first Science Fiction Convention in 1935, prevent an alien invasion of Earth in *THE STAR BOYS* . . . Tommy Lee Jones portrays a government agent hot on the trail of extraterrestrials in

the Columbia comedy *MEN IN BLACK*. It's based on the Malibu Comics series of the same name. Other comics-based features in development include 20th Century Fox's adaptation of Marvel Comics' *DAREDEVIL* from director Chris Columbus; Quentin Tarantino's possible Miramax feature *MODESTY BLAISE*, and an animated feature



based on Wendy and Richard Pini's *ELFQUEST* from producer Edward Pressman. Pressman also plans to bring a live-action version of Marvel's *LUKE CAGE* to the screen under John Singleton's direction.

New film versions of two classics of fantasy literature are planned: Steven Vincent Benét's *THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER* will feature Alec Baldwin as producer and star, and Oscar Wilde's *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* will be exhibited by producer Robert Evans and director Roman Polanski. Other literary adaptations in the works: two new versions of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes*—a cartoon production from Disney and a live-actioner from Fox... Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* will be cast away into outer space by director Ken Russell. (Guess Ken never saw *ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS*.)... Walter Mosely, author of *Devil in a Blue Dress*, has sold two other "Easy Rawlins" mysteries to Hollywood—*White Butterfly* and *A Red Death*... The next two Tom Clancy novels headed for movie screens are *Without Remorse*, which will star Keanu ("Who's David Geffen?") Reeves as assassin John Kelly, and *Cardinal of the Kremlin*, yet another Jack Ryan thriller ripe for yet another Harrison Ford star turn... John Gresham's *THE CHAMBER* starts shooting early next year with once and future bat-boy Chris O'Donnell in the lead... The Dean Koontz thrillers *Phantoms* and *Mr. Murder* are headed for the cameras next year... Science fiction novels due for screen treatment include Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War*, Philip K. Dick's *Paycheck*, Gene Brewer's emotional fable *K-PAX*, and L. Ron Hubbard's *Fear*, which may feature Dianetics devotee John Travolta in the movie version... Michael Caine is back at last as Len Deighton's British spy Harry Palmer (of *IPCRESS FILE* fame) in two new tales of intrigue: *BULLET TO BEIJING* and *MIDNIGHT IN ST. PETERSBURG*.

*THE AVENGERS* feature from director Nicholas Meyer is scheduled for a fall start, although at press time no cast has been announced. But if you've taken a gander at the November issue of *Mirabella*, it seems like Emma Thompson is lobbying hard for the role of Emma Peel (Amanda Donahoe would be The Hound's top choice.) Other upcoming big-screen versions of TV shows include the planned summer releases *MIS-SION: IMPOSSIBLE* with Tom Cruise

and *SPEED RACER* starring demon-on-wheels Johnny Depp; *ZORRO* from director Robert Rodriguez, who'll again employ his sizzling star of *DESPERADO*, Antonio Banderas, as his leading man; and *MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000*, in which Mike Nelson and his robot friends lambaste the 1954 space opera *THIS ISLAND EARTH*.

Even more future features: *LIGHT YEARS* is an anthology of three science-fantasy tales from *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS* producer Michael Phillips... Four high-school girls aspire to be witches (correct spelling) in *THE CRAFT*, which will feature more creepy crawly creatures than



THE MAN IN THE ATTIC

you can shake a cheerleader at... Another *BLADE RUNNER*-style sci-fi epic from Ridley Scott is entitled *METROPOLIS* (no relation to Fritz Lang's silent classic)... When Dinosaurs Ruled the Dance Floor: make-up master and animator John Dods is hard at work on his stop-motion comedy short *DINOSAUR RAG*, while director Rusty Cundieff steals a bit of prehistoric thunder with Columbia's planned *JURASSIC PARK* spoof, *DANCE WITH THE DINOSAURS*. Watch your feet.

Turning to the terrors of television: cable's Sci-Fi Channel will haunt your Halloween with a week-long zombie film festival starting October 23rd. Included are *CARNIVAL OF SOULS* and *THE EVIL DEAD*. And plan a stake-out for Sci-Fi's *KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER* marathon on October 30th and 31st... He's a cop! He's a vampire! He's two mints in one! Nope, he's Nick Knight, toothsome protagonist of USA Network's stylish series *FOR EVER KNIGHT*, starring Geraint Wyn Davies. Twenty-two brand-new

episodes have already begun their Monday night flight... The Hound's choice for the most terror-ific new offering this season is the CBS series *AMERICAN GOTHIC*. Gary Cole's portrayal of a demonic town sheriff must be sending longtime CBS lawman Matt Dillon spinning in his Dodge City grave. The biggest surprise: this critically lauded series comes to us courtesy of creator/producer Shaun Cassidy. That's right, the former teen heartthrob and Hardy Boy himself!... Speaking of the boy detectives, a new syndicated series called *NANCY DREW AND THE HARDY BOYS* premieres this fall. Starring Tracy Ryan as Nancy and Colin Gray and Paul Popowich as Frank and Joe, the updated adventures are a product of New Line Television and Nelvana Limited... Episodes of Showtime's acclaimed update of *THE OUTER LIMITS* can be seen this fall in local syndication in slightly altered (i.e., censored) versions. The same producers are prepping a new series for Showtime, *POLTERGEIST: THE LEGEND!*... Showtime has a bizarre winner in the one-shot *MAN IN THE ATTIC*, starring Anne Archer as an unhappily married woman who hides her youthful lover (Neil Patrick Harris) in her home's upper reaches for 20 years (until murder queers the deal). It's based on a true story, so husbands, clean house!... HBO joins in the frightening fun with plans for two of its own anthology series: *FEAR ITSELF*, a festival of phobias from producer Renny Harlin; and *WEIRD TALES*, a creepy collection culled from the issues of the vintage pulp magazine, to be produced by Oliver Stone and Francis Ford Coppola.

*DARK SKIES*, the new NBC telefilm and potential series, tells of secret alien involvement in critical world events from the '60s to the present. This goes a long way toward explaining the existence of disco... Two old favorites return next fall in new cartoon series. Warner Bros. will bring *The Man of Steel* to the WB Network in new adventures of *SUPERMAN*, and *THE REAL ADVENTURES OF JONNY QUEST* will debut on a trio of Turner cable channels: TBS, TNT, and The Cartoon Network. The now-teenaged Jonny will have a new squeeze (the niece of albino adventurer Race Bannon) and a new "anime" look combining computer and cel animation.

The indispensable PBS series *MYSTERY!* from Boston's WGBH has

begun its 16th and possibly last season its long-time funder Mobil Corporation has bailed out. Eight new episodes of POIROT are airing now through mid-December. The long-awaited MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, the late, greatly lamented Jeremy Brett's swan song of six hour-long Conan Doyle adaptations, will run from December 21st through January 25th. John Thaw returns in four INSPECTOR MORSE mysteries beginning in February. MYSTERY fans, make some noise! Let Mobil know we need our fix of high-quality, commercial-free crime on free broadcast TV. Incidentally, PRIME SUSPECT 4 will be part of the still-solvent (for now) MASTERPIECE THEATRE this season.

Already lurking in local video stores (and available from Scarlet Street Video) are a pair of Hammer Films releases from Columbia-TriStar: THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN and THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL. Also on hand is MCA's uncut, restored version of Orson Welles' TOUCH OF EVIL, and a gorgeous new Roan Group laserdisc release of RKO's 1932 classic THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME. A genuine rarity has been unearthed by Nostalgia Family Video of Or-

gon: THE SHADOW OF SILK LENNOX, a precode gangster musical (!), previously thought to be lost, starring a dapper young Lon Chaney Jr.

More video rarities surface in October when Kino on Video premieres two legendary classics of the 1930s: SHE, starring Helen Gahagan and



Gary Cole plays the Sheriff from Hell on CBS' AMERICAN GOTHIC.

Randolph Scott, and THE OLD DARK HOUSE with an all-star cast featuring Karloff the Uncanny. More contemporary October releases include MCA titles CASPER and VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED, CONGO from Paramount, and BATMAN FOREVER from Warners... MGM/UA is reissuing all the James Bond features at an affordable \$14.95 each... Fantasy fans will become animated over Columbia-TriStar's new laser boxed set of Ray Harryhausen classics: EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS, MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, and THE THREE WORLDS OF GULLIVER... Sci-fi thriller SPECIES and quirky canine fantasy FLUKE will be available for rental from MGM in November, as will the Prism Video release of the horror musical FRANKENSTEIN SINGS!, featuring Bobby "Boris" Pickett doing a few renditions of his greatest hit, "The Monster Mash." JUDGE DREDD (Buena Vista) hits the rental racks in December; APOLLO 13 (MCA) also rockets into video stores for the holidays at a bargain price of \$19.99.

Collectors of classic movie music will thrill to the Turner/Rhino Records premiere CD releases of two classic MGM soundtracks: the Harold Arlen-Herbert Stothart score for THE WIZARD OF OZ, and Ber-

nard Herrmann's original stereo recording of NORTH BY NORTHWEST. Both discs feature music never before released (More about both next issue!) Other recent CD releases of interest to Scarlet Listeners include Michael Kamen's score for THE DEAD ZONE (Milan), the TV soundtrack to VR.5 (BMG), and another Herrmann classic, FAHRENHEIT 451 (Varese Sarabande).

Never to be forgotten are the talents of the late screenwriters Howard Koch and Charles Bennett, authors Roger Zelazny and Elleston Trevor ("Adam Hall"), director Al Adamson, composer Miklos Rozsa, DJ Wolfman Jack, and performers Jeremy Brett, Robert Urquhart, Gale Gordon, Tony Hamilton, Gary Crosby, Shirley Patterson (Shawn Smith), Severn Darden, Esther Muir, Eva Gabor, Carole Mathews, Phyllis Brooks, Harry Guardino, Patsy Ruth Miller, Mark Stevens, George Barrows, Lana Turner, and Ida Lupino, who graciously gave her final interview to Scarlet Street.



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## MITCH PILEGGI interviewed by Jessie Lilley

Who's side is he on, anyway? As FBI Assistant Director Walter S. Skinner, Mitch Pileggi seemingly straddles the fence between concern and loyalty to agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully and grudging acquiescence to the demands of the enigmatic Cigarette Smoking Man. (That's Cancer Man, according to Mr. Mulder.)

Skinner had little to do in his first few appearances, but gradually he has become a vital component of the X-FILES phenomenon.

*Scarlet Street: X-FILES fans never quite know in which direction Skinner is going to jump.*

**Mitch Pileggi:** I know. I don't know which way he's going to jump, either. I just wait until I get the script and see who he's pissed off at, now. (Laughs)

**SS: How did you audition to play a character who's so ambiguous?**

**MP:** Actually, I just went in with a kind of an attitude, and fortunately it worked for the character. I base a lot of Skinner on my father and the way he dealt with people in his profession.

**SS: Which was...?**

**MP:** He worked with the Department of Defense on military contracts overseas, so it was a very similar situation. He had a lot of people he was responsible for and sometimes he had to be very, very tough with them. Yet he had a lot of compassion and was a very fair person. I lost my Dad about a year and a half ago; he was very big in my life. I didn't realize I was doing this with Skinner until I talked to my mom and my brothers and sisters, and they said, "You know, that's Dad." I had it down even to the way I sit in the chair and hold my hands. My mom sits there sometimes and cries, because I look a lot like my dad. He was bald, he wore glasses, he wore the suits....

**SS: Did you grow up overseas?**

**MP:** I lived overseas for a long time. We were over there from the time I was 10 years old, in Turkey. I graduated high school there and then I went to school in Germany. Then I ended up working in Saudi Arabia

and Iran for the same company as my dad.

**SS: What got you into acting?**

**MP:** Went crazy, I guess. (Laughs) I had done some acting in school and in college. I was in Iran when the revolution began and it was the third one I had been through. I just got tired of being in jeopardy all the time. So I came back to the States and started doing theater down in Texas.

**SS: From Turkey to Texas! And now you're busy shooting THE X-FILES in Vancouver.**

**MP:** I love it. Vancouver is very comfortable. It's a pretty city, and the people who work on the show are the best I've ever worked with. We have a ball. It's a real treat. Because of the nature of the character, a lot of times I'm in the office

## INSIDE THE X FILES



**SS: VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN?**

**MP:** I did a cameo in it. I worked with Eddie; he rips my heart out. (Laughs)

**SS: You also appeared in RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD.**

**MP:** Oh, my God! We all have to do these things sometimes in our careers.

**SS: Do you think Skinner's ever going to take to the field or is he going to remain a desk jockey?**

**MP:** I don't know; it's in the mind of Chris Carter.

**SS: Isn't there sometimes the danger that an enigmatic character such as Skinner will remain enigmatic for so long that the audience will become bored with him?**

**MP:** I think so; I think that's something Chris sees and I anticipate that more will be happening. I was talking to David one day and he mentioned it. David's becoming much more involved in story lines. He's indicated that Walter Skinner would be getting more of a life.

**SS: What kind of input do you get from Chris Carter?**

**MP:** I don't specifically talk to him much about the character. A lot of times the directors come in and it's the first time for me to work with them, so

they don't know what's going on and they pretty much leave me alone. Until recently, I didn't even know who the cigarette-smoking guy was, what his relationship was to me. I just found out he was my superior! I've been wantin' to ad-lib stuff like, "I'm going to kick his ass down Pennsylvania Ave!" Now I found out why I can't say it!

**SS: You may not say it, but it's sure on your mind!**

**MP:** (Laughs) Well, Skinner's not crazy about him and how he screws with Mulder and Scully. It's



Mitch Pileggi

and only shoot one or two days, but I usually go up a week before and stay a week during shooting and a week afterwards. It's a real struggle to get myself to come back to Los Angeles!

**SS: Before X-FILES, you had some strange encounters in the acting profession. For instance, you worked for Wes Craven in SHOCKER as a resurrected psychotic?**

**MP:** Oh, I had fun with that role. I've worked with Wes three times; I just got done doing a bit in Eddie Murphy's....

Photo © 1995 Fox Broadcasting Company Michael Lavine/FOX



Mitch Pileggi wanted more scenes with Gillian Anderson. He wound up pointing a gun at her in the third season opening episode.



a pretty combative relationship, but, ultimately, he has to answer to him. I don't know if you saw the Virus episode? There's one image there, one scene where Mulder and Skinner and the cigarette-smoking man are in the office and they're really goin' at it. As Mulder walks out of the office, he says something to me like, "I'm not going to be part of this. Are you?" He looks at me and walks past, and I'm stuck right between them. That's exactly the predicament Skinner is in.

SS: Skinner runs hot and cold. Is he ever going to take a firm stand?

MP: Well, he never does anything that I tell him to do, you know? (Laughs) Wouldn't you get irritated? I tell him to do something and he goes right out and does whatever he wants! Then he comes back and I'll pat him on the back and say, "Good boy!"

SS: Will Skinner ever take a stand pro or con on the X-Files themselves?

MP: I think he has already.

SS: Pro?

MP: Pro. He's definitely on Mulder and Scully's side. It's just a matter of him being stuck with the people he works for and his position. The only way that he can really get out of the situation is to leave and he ain't gonna do that. He's got a career. I think he came up from where Mulder is; I think he was in the same type of field work and he's elevated himself to where he is now. He's not gonna just throw it away. Then again, having been where Mulder's at, I think he sympathizes with him.

SS: Skinner wasn't a major component of THE X-FILES at the beginning of the series. How did the character develop into a major player?

MP: Well, I think they were looking for somebody to fill that hole. Fortunately, they liked what I was doing with it. From what I understand, they had tried several other

people in the past and it didn't work out.

SS: But you hit the nail on the head.

MP: Well—thank goodness for me (Laughs)

SS: Do you think we'll see more interaction between Skinner and Dana Skully?

MP: I hope so, because we had that eight episode arc in the beginning of the season and I hadn't worked with Gillian up until the Virus episode. I was really looking forward to working with her.

SS: And what is it like working with Gillian Anderson?

MP: She's a sweetheart. We goof and do crazy stuff. But she's so right there when you're working with her and onscreen she's so appealing. David's a good actor, too.

SS: How do you like working with David Duchovny?

MP: We have fun; we get really goofy. David and I really get into it. As a matter of fact, [director] Rob Bowman pulled us both back and said, "You two, when you get together you start chewing the scenery up." (Laughs) Our juices really get flowing when we do a scene together.

SS: Well, along with thousands of fans, we'll be looking forward to seeing you this season on THE X-FILES.

MP: The reaction to the show is amazing; I think it's just wonderful. Chris does a tremendous job on it and I don't know where he keeps coming up with this stuff.

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# ROGER EDUX

## Corman and Company Strike Again!

by Ken Schachtman and Danny Savello



Watch out, TV viewers! The Poemeister of American International Pictures, the gentleman who brought you Vincent Price in *THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH* (1964), who turned Shelley Winters into *BLOODY MAMA* (1970), who gave Jack Nicholson his big break as a masochistic dental patient in the original *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* (1960), the author of *How I Made a Hundred Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost a Dime* (Random House, 1990), has created a series of 13 horror and sci-fi movies for Showtime under the appropriate title, *ROGER CORMAN PRESENTS*, by the New Horizons Production Company. To those who have wondered what Corman might have accomplished given larger budgets, more script development time, jazzier special effects, the answer is—the same! That is, he'd tell a bunch of rousing, ribald tales to entertain a whole new generation of horror, sci-fi, and action movie addicts.

The first of these telemovies, which premiered last July, poses the wonderfully unanswerable question: "How do you know you are who you think you are?" To this essence of paranoia add a generous helping of *TOTAL RECALL*, a few splashes of *TERMINATOR* action, a (plot) twist of *THREE DAYS OF THE CONDOR*, and you have *SUSPECT DEVICE*, an edge-of-your-seat sci-fi action thriller produced by Mike Elliott, directed by Rick Jacobson, and starring C. Thomas Howell as a low-level government operative

who finds himself caught in a web that would choke any spider. Howell is ably assisted by Stacey Travis, Jed Allen, John Beck, Marcus Aurelius, and Jonathan Fuller as a truly '90s-style mad scientist.

Corman, who is listed as either producer or executive producer of the Showtime films, went to Russia to find the proper atmosphere for two of them, *HELLFIRE* and *BRAM STOKER'S BURIAL OF THE RATS*. The first of these, directed by David Tausik, stars Ben Cross (*DARK SHADOWS*), Jennifer Burns, Beverly Garland, and Doug Wert, with the rest of the cast list ably filled by Russian actors. The plot is somewhat reminiscent of Corman's brief excursion into H. P. Lovecraft territory, *THE HAUNTED PALACE* (1963), with a diabolic force waiting in a moldering castle to possess the innocent. It is also rife with the Corman style of suggestive humor, as when Ivette, a well endowed choir member, asks Ben Cross, as the choir master, whether he thinks she's flat. Indeed, those with a mammalian fixation will have a grand time with this flick, since almost every woman in it gets a chance to rip off her upper garments and charge the camera, heaving and bobbling. The love scenes are hot enough to give even Anne Rice a run for her money in the Gothic Erotica Department.

One of *HELLFIRE*'s stars, Corman veteran Beverly Garland, was happy not only to be the sole actress in the venture to remain discreetly clothed, but also to be working with an old friend.

"Can you believe that, after 40 years, I'm back with Roger Corman?" says Garland, shaking her head in bemused disbelief. "I can't believe that's what's happening to my career, but I guess that's what's happened to my career!"

Although Garland had enlivened many of Corman's early sci-fi efforts, including *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD* (1956) and *NOT OF THIS EARTH* (1957), the producer had been reluctant in recent years to hire his former star.

"Well, Beverly was one of my favorite leading ladies," recalls Corman. "Just as I have gotten older, Beverly's gotten older, and I was always embarrassed to offer her a character role, since she had played leading ladies for me. But this is a strong, good role.

SCARLET STREET 29





**LEFT:** *HELLFIRE* (originally *HAUNTED SYMPHONY*) marks Beverly Garland's return to Corman territory. **RIGHT:** Ben Cross strikes a Christlike pose, but he's really the devil in disguise!

It's really one of three star roles, although it's a bit smaller than the other two leads. Also, it's the first picture we did in Moscow. I was uncertain about how everything would go, and I knew that Beverly could ride with anything. So I thought, "Why not?"

From Corman's lips to Garland's ear: "Roger just called and said, 'How would you like to go to Russia?' I called my agent and said, 'Listen, I don't know what the deal is, but I want to go.' So we went! Russia was fascinating. We worked in a studio called Mosque Films, which is probably three times as big as MGM, and was owned by the state at one time. Now it's falling apart, but the sets are magnificent. Elizabeth Taylor had done a very big movie there, *THE BLUE BIRD*, and had left all these magnificent sets. Mirrors and all sorts of gold things, gargoyles and castles—naturally, it was all card-

board, but it was still gorgeous! Well, Roger looked at these sets and said, 'My God! This is fabulous!' And he went back home and said to his secretary, 'Write me a script!' And she did!"

Instructing your secretary to write the screenplay for your next opus might seem, well, peculiar if we were discussing any other filmmaker—but this is Roger Corman, who had the script written for *THE TERROR* (1963) because he had some standing sets and three days left on Boris Karloff's contract for *THE RAVEN* (1963). So—the secretary wrote the script!

"She's a very talented little girl," smiles Garland, who's seen it all before. "The director, David Tausik, rewrote a lot of it. Then every actor who came in rewrote some of it! Ben Cross didn't like this, and he wanted this changed, and I didn't like that, and I wanted that

**LEFT:** Elizabeth Barondes adds a bit of titillation to the latest remake of *NOT OF THIS EARTH*. In the original, the role was played by Beverly Garland. **RIGHT:** *THE WASP WOMAN* stings again!





changed. We all changed it with David's okay—and sometimes without David's okay!"

Garland, who gives the impression that she could get on well with just about anyone, particularly enjoyed working with Ben Cross. "It was fun working with Ben, because he is very, very talented. He would make a fabulous director, I think. It was hard to film in Russia, because nobody spoke any English. We had three interpreters, and David had to work with a cameraman who spoke no English at all. So there was a lot of tension, and a lot of problems, but I think it's going to be good. Otherwise we'll have another interview and you can ask, 'What did you think of that mess?'"

Actually, both *HELLFIRE* and *BRAM STOKER'S BURIAL OF THE RATS* came about before the Showtime deal. Under its original title of *THE HAUNTED SYMPHONY*, *HELLFIRE* has already made it to video, where it proved to be a sumptuous-looking film with strong performances from Garland and Cross.

"I play the witch," laughs Garland. "I play Carlotta, who is married to a man called the Baron. He has this magnificent castle called Cashmire, and he writes a symphony for the Devil. The townspeople find out about it and they kill him. Now his niece comes, and the only person still living in the castle is Carlotta, who knows that, once the symphony is finished, she and the Baron will take over the souls of the people who completed the work."

"This is a Gothic horror, the type of film that I did with Edgar Allan Poe," chimes in Corman. "I'm trying to diversify. All of our recent horror films have been contemporary, so I thought it would be interesting to go back to the type of film I was doing in the '60s."

His directorial days behind him since *FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND* (1990), producer Corman is rarely on the set during shooting, but he did manage to catch a little of *HELLFIRE*. "I went to Russia to set up the original deal and look at the sets, which were under construction at that time. Then I went for the beginning of shooting. I was there the last couple of days of preproduction, and the first couple of days of shooting. As a matter of fact, we also did *BURIAL OF THE RATS* in Moscow. It stars Adrienne Barbeau, Maria Ford, and Kevin Albers, a new, young actor who I think is very good. It has to do with a woman who has certain powers over rats. The young male lead is Bram Stoker, who meets the Queen of the Rats. His story was just a brief two or three pages, though, so frankly we've taken rather large liberties with it. We've maintained the characters, and added a lot of other things."

*BRAM STOKER'S BURIAL OF THE RATS* is produced by Anatoly Fradis and directed by Dan Golden. It is not meant to be taken seriously, as it is quite obviously

an excuse for a large number of buxom women to dance about in fur thong bikinis while Barbeau, tootling on a magic flute that gives her power over Mickey Mouse's relatives, growls such lines as, "I am the Queen of Vermin, the Pied Piper's twisted sister!" It's all bosoms and buns, straight sex and lesbian jealousy, with just enough gore thrown in to justify calling it a horror movie.

In contrast, *SAWBONES* is a tightly written, well acted, darkly humorous, and very bloody tale of the search for a serial killer who likes to play doctor—or, more accurately, surgeon—on wide-awake patients. His fantasy life is rich and full, including imaginary golf games with phantom colleagues! Produced by Mike Elliott and directed by Catherine Cyran, it has an able cast that includes Adam Baldwin as the police officer

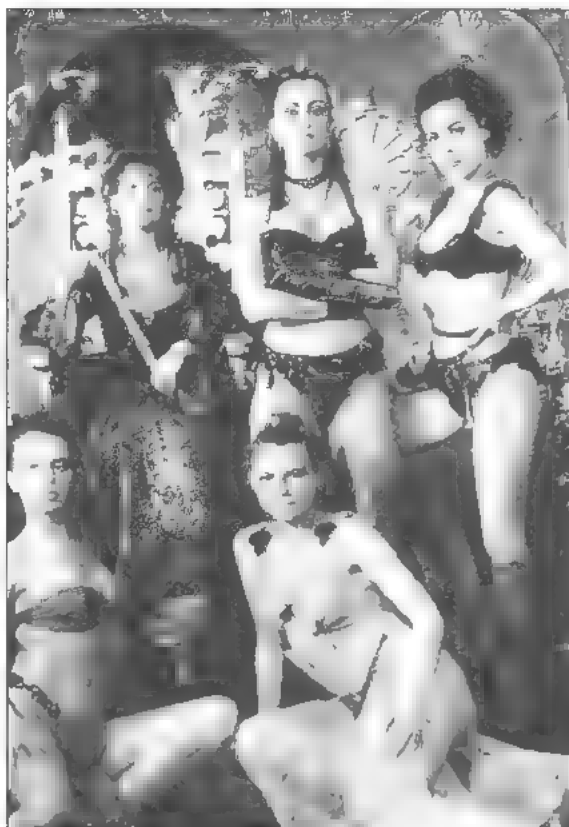
in charge of the investigation, Don Stroud as his pushy superior, Nina Siemaszko as a curious clerk in a large hospital, Barbara Carrera as the head of the admitting department, Nicholas Sadler as Nina's self involved doctor boyfriend, and Don Harvey as the Psycho Cutter. Warning: don't see this movie before having elective surgery!

Other new Corman treats include *THE ALIEN WITHIN*, starring Roddy McDowall, and *VIRTUAL SEDUCTION*, which is about the addictive effects of virtual-reality machines. (The flick stars Jeff Fahey of 1992's *LAWNMOWER MAN*.)

The cream of the crop, however, is *NOT OF THIS EARTH*, a gorified remake of the 1957 Corman classic that originally starred Beverly Garland, Paul Birch, and Dick Miller. (The flick already went the remake road back in 1988, with former porn princess Traci Lords in the Garland role.) The new version stars Michael York in an engaging performance as Mr. Johnson, an alien who comes to Earth seeking a cure for the blood disease depopulating his planet. (This

new *NOT* links the otherworldly ailment to AIDS in a manner that, surprisingly, is neither glib nor cheap.) Elizabeth Barondes takes over the Garland role here, and in a typical updating of her predecessor's sexy swimsuit scene in the original, goes topless. (Compared to Garland, she also goes talentless.) Mason Adams lends deft support as a physician forced to find a cure for ailing Johnsons (that is to say, aliens), but Parker Stevenson, as a cop, acts as though he were still playing one of the Hardy Boys and looks, with his bushy mustache, like former adult-film icon Harry Reems. (That's Corman Land for you; the porn stars act and the actors look like porn stars!)

ROGER CORMAN PRESENTS promises to feature more remakes along the lines of *NOT OF THIS EARTH*. With an entire library of Corman classics at Showtime's disposal, it is a virtual certainty that these 13 telefilms are only the beginning.



Adrienne Barbeau plays the Rodent Queen in *BRAM STOKER'S BURIAL OF THE RATS*, originally geared for theatrical release.



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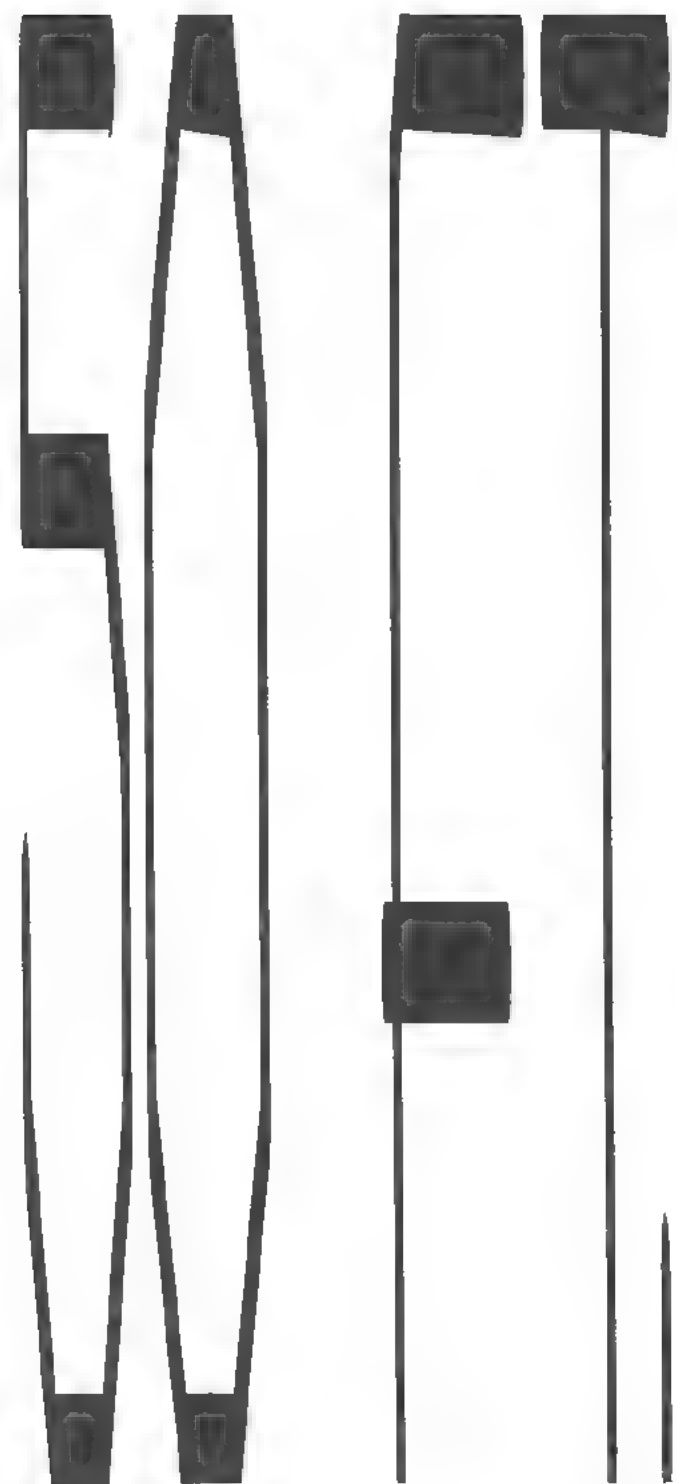
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# ATTACK OF THE



## SOUNDTRACKS BY MICHAEL BRUNAS

The boom in recorded vintage film scores, which began in the 1970s, is showing no signs of abating. While the downside of this rash of recordings is the tiring re-recycling of *GONE WITH THE WIND* (1939) and John Williams' Greatest Hits, the more adventurous labels are providing us with a very worthwhile upside: venturing into the relatively uncharted territory of "B" sci-fi and horror films. Hans Salter, Roy Webb, and James Bernard are among those who have recently enjoyed first-rate recordings of their works, with a slate of new releases to come. Now Varèse Sarabande, under the delectably demented producership of Bruce Kimmel, has issued the first and long overdue compilation of the film scores of Ronald Stein.

Stein was the most distinctive and prolific of a group of composers (including Albert Glasser, Paul Dunlap, and Raoul Kraushaar) who spent the Fabulous Fifties playing their trade for the drive-in features of American International, Allied Artists, et al.

Genre fans first became familiar with Ronald Stein through Roger Corman's early excursions into science fiction. The haunting, melancholy hum of a theramin quivering through a radiation-charred landscape marked Stein's score for *THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED* (1956). He next provided a suitably tubby orchestral texture for the overgrown space cabbage that waddled out of his Bronson Canyon habitat for no other reason than to throttle Beverly Garland in *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD* (1956).

"Roger was wonderful for young talent," recalls Harlene Stein, the composer's widow, who recently chatted with *Scarlet Street* on the occasion of Varèse Sarabande's new CD release, *NOT OF THIS EARTH. THE FILM SCORES OF RONALD STEIN*. "He had a knack for finding talented people and leaving them to their own devices. Ronnie did *APACHE WOMAN*, his first score at American International, for Sam Arkoff, Jim Nicholson, Alex Gordon, and Roger. They signed him to a five-year contract in 1956. Ronnie was their music director and during those five years he wrote 55 film scores, working with all of the producers who came to American International with their projects. It was a wonderful apprenticeship. In those five years, he worked in every genre: war films, horror films, westerns. He really enjoyed it."

Stein went on to compose a total of 93 film scores and countless TV shows, but it is his horror and sci fi assignments to which the disc is devoted. Though lovingly remastered from the composer's own tapes, this issue wasn't cobbled together without a sense of humor. Kimmel's liner notes are a funny, affectionate scherzo in tribute to his childhood Saturday matinee movie memories. Even the cues bear such tongue-in-cheek titles as "Crab Clause" from *ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS* (1957), "Spider Stravinsky" from *SPIDER BABY* (1964), and "The Eyes Have It" from the title track.

The CD came into being thanks in large part to video producer Ted Newsom. "Ted came to my house because he was working on a Vincent Price documentary and wanted to use some of Ronnie's music," explains Mrs. Stein, who is at last realizing her dream of getting her late husband's scores released. "While he was in my living room, he saw all of Ronnie's tapes, which are in a big bookcase. He said, 'My God! Are those all of the films? Well, we've got to get a CD out!'"

"Ted went to Bruce Kimmel at Varèse Sarabande, who was very enthused about the project. It was Bruce who





**LEFT:** Ronald and Harlene Stein paint the town Scarlet in 1956. **RIGHT:** Richard Denning, Lori Nelson, Ronald Stein, Adele Jergens, and Mike (Touch) Connors on the set of *THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED* (1955).

led the way and told us what he thought would be good on a CD. We found the scores and played them for Bruce and he loved them."

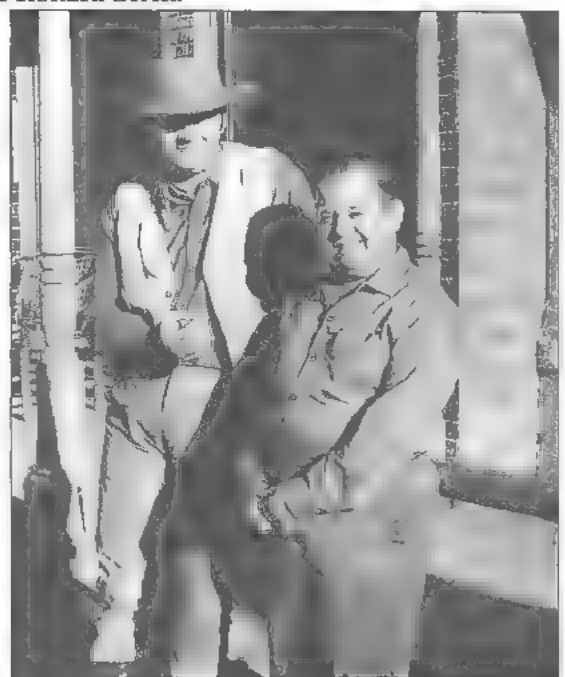
The disc is a perfect musical souvenir of the days when double features topped the bill at local movie palaces, and when styrofoam and plaster were the stuff of low-budget movie monsters. It was also a time when fast-buck producers had the horse sense to realize that, if their ragtag creatures and see-through giants looked hopeless, the soundtrack at least had better mean business. It was challenging work even under the best of circumstances—and the best of circumstances were rare for composers working the "B" movie grind.

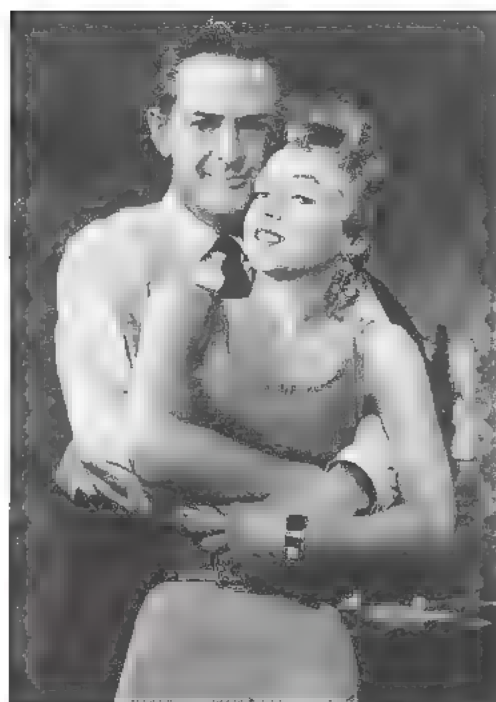
"You have to remember, my husband did his first score when he was 26 years old in 1955," recounts Mrs. Stein. "There were no videos, but he usually had a rough cut. They called him in before they shot because he liked to be involved in the entire film. He would look at the rough cut and spotted with a director or producer."

"Ronnie would figure out where the music would go and then he would just sit down and write. He was extremely precise with every frame of film. The music editor very rarely had to move anything that he did."

In an industry in which discipline, speed, and talent were the watchwords, Ronald Stein found himself a busy man. "He usually had three or four weeks to do a score,

**LEFT:** Ronald Stein with Linda Lawson for Warner Bros.' *THE THREAT* (1960). **RIGHT:** Producer Alex Gordon poses on the set of *THE BOUNTY KILLER* with composer turned actor Ronald Stein.





**LEFT:** Beverly Garland sticks it to Paul Birch in the original *NOT OF THIS EARTH* (1957). **RIGHT:** Yvette Vickers is just wild about Harry (William Hudson) in *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN* (1958).

but he also wrote some on weekends. He'd get the downbeat on Monday morning that he started on Friday evening, having finished conducting a score Friday afternoon. He had phenomenal stamina. He could stay up three or four nights in a row, just taking cat naps."

Tight budgets ultimately meant small orchestras. On some of the earlier scores (notably *ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS* and 1958's *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN*), it is evident that the composer had to fall back on his ingenuity in order to produce massive musical effects. Stein generally favored a "less is more" approach and applied it most memorably in Big Crab's companion feature, *NOT OF THIS EARTH* (1957). It is a sparse but innovative score, filled with unsettling effects and startling dissonances.

In a bid to break away from the standard small-scale Hollywood orchestra, Stein began increasingly to use such larger musical forces as the Schoen Strasse in Munich and the Dimas Studios in Mexico City. "I'm a musician myself, a singer, and I also contracted many of his orchestras. On those early films, I even copied all of the music," says Mrs. Stein.

"When Ronnie went to Munich to do *THE BASHFUL ELEPHANT* in 1959 for Doug MacGowan, he came back with a phenomenal sound. He used, I think, a 102-piece orchestra. Here in the States, he was using 33. When Ronnie played that tape for Roger, Roger went crazy, he just got so excited! So, he sent Ronnie back to Munich to do *THE HAUNTED PALACE*. From then on, Ronnie did many scores there."

In fact, when AIP launched its ambitious Edgar Allan Poe series, they may have blundered by passing Ronald Stein in favor of Les Baxter, who was then better known in the pop field than in film composition. When Stein was given an occasional Poe assignment, such as *THE HAUNTED PALACE* (1963), his work was certainly equal (and arguably superior) to Baxter's. (*New York Times* critic Howard Thompson, though cool to Corman's *THE PREMATURE BURIAL* (1962), hastened to

add that "it does have compelling music . . . (in) Ronald Stein's rhapsodic treatment of 'Molly Malone,' heretofore a harmless tune." (Unfortunately, none of Stein's Poe scores have made it to this disc; complete recordings of *BURIAL* and *PALACE* would surely find places of honor in any film-music fan's collection.)

Considering that Varèse Sarabande confined this disc only to a couple of genres, it contains an impressive mix-and-match of styles. Just as you're lulled by the irresistible juke-box ditties of *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN*, you're plunged into a Gothic barnstormer, such as the Main Title from *THE TERROR* (1963). For connoisseurs of the psychotronic, the runaway favorite will be the Bobby Pickett-inspired theme of *SPIDER BABY*. With Lon Chaney Jr. applying his less than dulcet tones to a minefield of gruesome lyrics (Cannibal spiders creep and crawl/Boys and ghouls having a ball/Frankenstein, Dracula and even The Mummy/are sure to end up in somebody's tummy), it's a classic Halloween party record.

Harlene Stein selects the score for *DEMENTIA 13* (1963), Francis Ford Coppola's early exercise in psychological suspense, as her personal favorite on the CD. "Francis worked very closely with Ronnie on that, because Francis was a musician. The style of writing on *DEMENTIA 13* was very different, very unique. Ronnie was classically trained; he studied with Paul Hindemith at Yale. That's why all of his scores are definitely in that vein, with a big orchestra. He was a melodist, but he was a fantastic orchestrator."

Now that other record companies have expressed interest in Ronald Stein's musical legacy, further releases may well be in the offing. May we suggest such classic Stein scores as the previously mentioned *THE HAUNTED PALACE* and *THE PREMATURE BURIAL*, or the jazz-influenced *THE LAST WOMAN ON EARTH* (1960)? It's tempting to say the best is yet to come, but Varèse Sarabande's *NOT OF THIS EARTH* is so spectacular that the best may already be here!

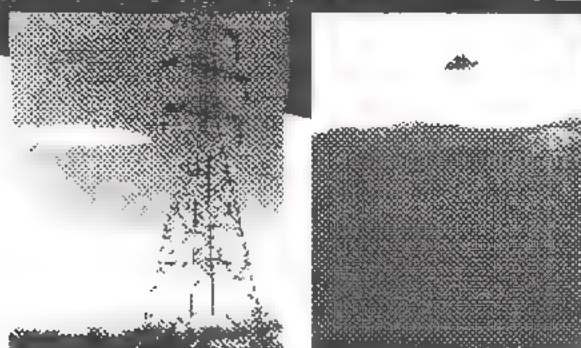


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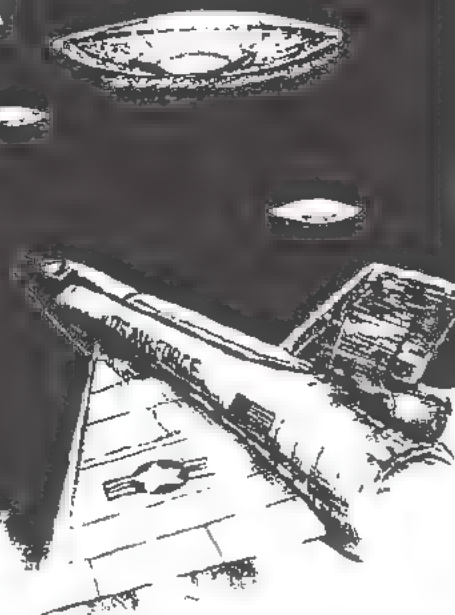
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# SCREEN...



## The Latest on Laser by Sean Farrell

**R**ecently, Showtime introduced Roger Corman to a new generation with **ROGER CORMAN PRESENTS**, an anthology series produced by the legendary filmmaker. The series revived Corman's image as the King of the "B" Movies, those mindless flicks made cheaply and quickly for maximum profit. This wasn't always the case in Corman's career. Back in the 1960s, he directed a series of big budget (for Corman, at least) films based on the stories of Edgar Allan Poe for American International Pictures. Now, thanks to Orion Home Video and Image Entertainment, a new generation can discover Corman at his best

**THE HOUSE OF USHER & THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM**  
Orion Home Video/Image Ent.  
Sides 1, 2, and 3 CLV  
\$49.99

**THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER** and **THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM** is a very impressive set. Starring Vincent Price, these classic adaptations of Poe's work were written by Richard Matheson.

Shot in 15 days with a budget of approximately \$270,000, **USHER** opens with Philip (Mark Damon) calling on Madeline Usher (Myrna Fahey), only to find out that her brother, Roderick (Price), forbids their relationship because of a family

curse. Philip dodges falling chandeliers and sidesteps creaky railings as the very house itself tries to prevent him from claiming his beloved.

The picture is clear and clean, and the sound is excellent: when the house rumbles its displeasure in Chapter 7, I could almost feel the vibrations in my eardrums. (I was wearing earphones.) The absence of any distortion in the sound track allows the viewer to enjoy Les Baxter's atmospheric music, as well as clearly understand every word of Price's chilling, soft-spoken performance.

One minor nitpick, the awkward side break. It occurs at the end of Chapter 16, as the camera pans toward Madeline's sealed coffin and we hear her scream from within. There is a natural fade to black following this shocking scene that would have been perfect for the

break. Orion/Image instead chooses to let the film run past the fade and break on an exterior shot of the Usher mansion, spoiling the mood. Side Two picks up cleanly with a despondant Philip preparing to leave the House of Usher.

**THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM** opens with the arrival of Francis (a wooden John Kerr) at Medina Castle, on the Spanish coast. Having received the bad news that his sister Elizabeth (Barbara Steele) has passed away, Francis is eager to learn the details of her death. Nicholas Medina (Price) tries to convince Francis that his sister's demise was the result of "something in her blood," but he is not satisfied. His own investigation leads to the discovery that Nicholas' father ran the local torture chamber years ago in the service of the Spanish Inquisition. The climax, with the formidable pendulum, easily shows one what it's like to be a side of ham in a deli.

The **PIT** picture is not the pits; nary a scratch can be seen. The sound is also good, with the exception of some minor popping on the soundtrack in Chapter 33. The well-chosen side break comes after Chapter 32, in which Catherine (Luana Anders) tells Francis the sordid details of a young Nicholas witnessing the murders of his mother and uncle. **USHER** and **PIT** have been placed on three sides of two discs in the CLV mode.

**THE RAVEN & THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH**  
Orion Home Video/Image Ent.  
Sides 1, 2, 3, and 4 CLV  
\$59.99

**THE RAVEN** and **THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH** make for an especially interesting double bill. Though both are adapted from the works of Edgar Allan Poe, there is a sharp difference in the tone and style of each picture. **THE RAVEN** is a lighthearted fantasy; in contrast, **THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH** not only returns to the more solemn atmosphere of Corman's earlier Poe films, but probably represents the series at its grimmest.

Starring Vincent Price, Boris Karloff, and Peter Lorre, **THE RAVEN** gives these horror greats a decent stage on which to strut their stuff. Price plays against type as Dr. Erasmus Craven, a gentle soul who is a practitioner of witchcraft. He is



visited one night by Dr. Adolphus Bedlo (Lorre), who has been turned into a raven by the evil Dr. Scarabus (Karloff) while visiting the latter's castle. After reverting Bedlo to human form, Craven is horrified to learn that his beloved late wife, Lenore (Hazel Court), was spied by Bedlo at Scarabus' castle. Fearing that the evil wizard is holding his wife's spirit hostage, Craven travels to Scarabus' lair to confront the villain. Going along for the ride are Lorre, Olive Sturgess as Craven's daughter, and an unbelievably youthful Jack Nicholson as Bedlo's son.

Except for an occasional scratch, the picture looks clean as a whistle. The problem is the sound. Beginning with Chapter 5, the audio is slightly distorted—especially when the actors speak. In Chapter 8, when Lorre says, "I saw her there!" the sound sharply rises in volume. Granted, this isn't the first time I've ever been jarred by a disc, but this doesn't appear to be the result of the stereo mix; the sound level (mainly on Side One) is simply uneven.

In *THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH*, Price shines as Prince Prospero, a blackhearted nobleman who rules the 12th-century Italian countryside with an iron hand. He blissfully ignores the plague that is ravishing his people, secure in the belief that his worship of Satan will protect him and his followers. With an excellent script by Charles Beaumont and R. Wright Campbell, Corman shot this classic in just 15 days, using grandiose sets left over from *BECKET* (1964). Nicolas Roeg, who would go on to direct David Bowie as *THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH* (1976), served as Corman's cinematographer on *MASQUE*.

Again, there are some scratches (particularly during the final scene in Chapter 58), but the picture on the whole is clear, and the color is incredibly rich. The audio track is flawless. The side break is aptly placed after a natural fade.

#### **THE PREMATURE BURIAL & TALES OF TERROR**

Side 1, 2, and 3 CLV  
Orion HomeVideo/Image Ent.  
\$49.99

After a dispute with AIP producers Sam Arkoff and James Nicholson over profits from *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM*, Corman decided to



film *THE PREMATURE BURIAL* as a separate project. However, Vincent Price was under exclusive contract to AIP, so Corman hired Ray Milland for the lead role of Carrell, a wealthy man obsessed with the fear of being buried alive. (Through a series of legal maneuvers, Arkoff managed to snare the release rights to *BURIAL*, after all.)

The opening scene in *BURIAL* looks a bit scratchy, but the real problem comes in Chapter 5, when Milland escorts Hazel Court (playing his wife) to the family crypt beneath the house. Here, a vertical black line runs down the left side of the screen. (Chapter 5 must be where the li'l gremlins live, because the soundtrack at this point is marred by a low crackling noise.) Other than these minor flaws, the quality of the transfer to laser is quite good. The side break is appropriate, coming after Chapter 15 with a natural fade on Court embracing Milland.

*TALES OF TERROR* begins at Chapter 26 on Side Two. This is a splendid anthology flick starring Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, and Basil Rathbone. The first story, "Morella," concerns a young woman, Lenora (Maggie Pierce), visiting her reclusive father, Locke (Price), for the first time since her mother's death. The grief-stricken Locke rejects Lenora, feeling only hatred toward his daughter because his wife, Morella (Leona Gage), died after giving her birth. Locke has been haunted by

Morella's death, little realizing that he'll soon be haunted quite literally.

In "The Black Cat," Peter Lorre plays a lush who finds himself in heaven: a wine-tasting convention at which Price is holding court as a famous critic. Challenging Price to a hysterically funny winetasting contest, Lorre gets so smashed that he needs help getting home. Lending a helping hand, Price meets Lorre's wife (the memorable Joyce Jameson) and has an affair with her. Once Lorre learns of this, he walls up the lovers in his cellar. (Here the story blends with another Poe tale, "The Cask of Amontillado," a fact ignored in the rather perfunctory liner notes accompanying this set.) The cat of the title is a frisky feline, hated by Lorre, who is the rotund boozier's eventual downfall.

The final tale, "The Case of M. Valdemar," showcases Basil Rathbone as Carmichael, a "doctor" treating the dying Valdemar (Price) with hypnotism to lessen his suffering. Mesmerist and patient agree that, just before Valdemar dies, he will be placed under hypnosis to prolong life. The result is that Valdemar's spirit, under the complete control of Carmichael, is trapped in a dead, rotting body. But when Carmichael goes too far with the living corpse's "widow," Valdemar doesn't take it lying down!

Picture and audio is very good, with one exception being Chapter 31, in which a black mark briefly ap



pears in the upper left hand corner of the screen. It would have been better to have the side break come at the end of the first story, "Morella," but Orion/Image lets the disc run well into the opening chapter of "The Black Cat."

The big news about all three sets of Corman/Poe films is that they are presented in their original scope aspect ratios of 2:35.1. Thanks to the letterbox format, these masterpieces can, for the first time in years, be viewed in their original wide-screen framing. Gone are the awkward pan and scan formatting of previous videotape releases, which more often than not resulted in a character having a conversation with somebody offscreen. To finally see the magnificent sets on which Price and company strutted their stuff only adds to the feel of actually being in the dark fantasy world of Edgar Allan Poe. Grab these sets before they are "nevermore" available!

#### INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

Warner Home Video  
Sides 1 and 2 CLV; Side 3 CAV  
\$39.99

While I must confess to never having been a rabid Anne Rice fan, I did want to see *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* (1994) when it premiered last year. Unfortunately, I never got around to it. Perhaps this is just as well, because I can now judge the film on its own merits without all the needless, hysterical hype that surrounded its theatrical release. It's a well made shocker that makes for a fine entry in any vampire movie marathon.

*INTERVIEW*'s laser release is in a wide-screen format. For this reason alone, I'd recommend the disc. The dark journeys of Louis (Brad Pitt), the reluctant vampire, deserve to be seen in the original compositions as envisioned by director Neil Jordan. Although the laser jacket claims *INTERVIEW* is letterboxed at a 1.85:1 aspect ratio, it doesn't quite equal the Criterion Collection's *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992), which is also matted in 1.85:1.

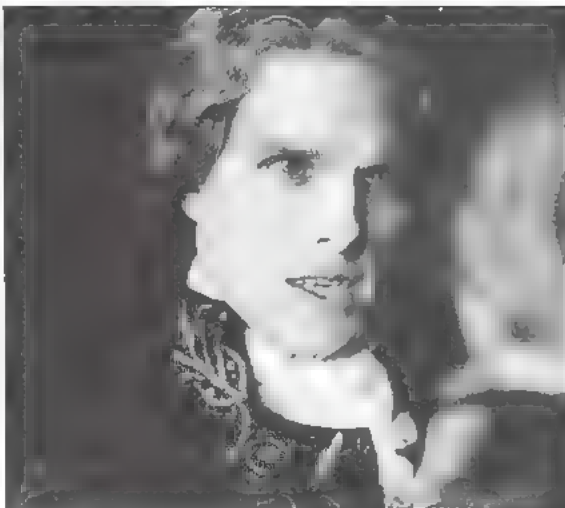
The picture and audio on *INTERVIEW* are excellent. The haunting chorus heard over the opening titles is truly majestic—and when Louis drinks Lestat's (Tom Cruise) blood in

Chapter 5, his pulsating heartbeat is thunderous. Thanks to the soundtrack, every shock moment—and there are many—will have you jumping out of your seat. The crystal-clear visuals let viewers enjoy Stan Winston's stunning vampire make ups, which are brilliantly subtle and somehow natural in their design. Rest assured, the laser shows off the undead's pale, translucent skin and piercing eyes to great effect.

Spread out over two discs, *INTERVIEW* has two side breaks. The first, coming when Louis reminds Malloy (Christian Slater) to turn over the interview tape, is very well chosen. However, the second break, which occurs just before the Paris vampires abduct Louis and Claudia (Kirsten Dunst), is incredibly jarring. The impact of the attack is all but destroyed by the break in the action.

Side 3 is in CAV, enabling the viewer to enjoy Chapter 4 ("Merci-

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less Revenge") in a frame by gory frame analysis. Again, the effects (courtesy of Winston and the folks at Digital Domain) are astonishing.

With a production history as fascinating as its storyline, I can't help but feel that *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* would be even better on laser with a detailed supplementary section. Still, this is a terrific—if not definitive—presentation.

#### THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL: COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Fox Video  
Sides 1, 2, and 3 CLV; Side 4 CAV  
\$69.99

In the past, the folks at Fox Video have released the definitive laser

versions of such genre films as *THE ABYSS* (1989), *ALIEN* (1979), and *ALIENS* (1986). Now, with *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951), Fox gives another sci-fi classic the deluxe treatment. Handsomely presented in a gatefold edition, *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* is presented in CLV on both sides of one disc. This is the cleanest print that I have ever seen of this film. The audio is also clear and well-defined; Bernard Herrmann's superb score—especially during Gort's first appearance—has never sounded better. The side break occurs after a natural fade in Chapter 19, right after Klaatu (Michael Rennie) explains his mission to Professor Burnhardt (an Einsteinian Sam Jaffe).

A secondary audio track features director Robert Wise being interviewed by writer/director Nicholas Meyer. Not only do they discuss the background of making the film, but Wise comments on various scenes as they are presented. (One example: when the flying saucer comes in for a landing, Meyer points out that what sells the shot is the saucer's shadow as it hovers over a baseball field. Wise mentions that the Army units that surround the saucer aren't what they appear to be—they're actually National Guard troops; the Army refused to have anything to do with *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL*.)

As if this weren't enough, this pristine edition of *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* comes with a second disc featuring a 70-minute documentary on the film's production, plus a frame supplement loaded with stills and additional information. There is also the complete shooting script, blueprints of the spaceship, and a collection of memos from studio boss Darryl F. Zanuck regarding the *EARTH STOOD STILL* script. (One particularly memorable note reads: "Has the title 'The Man From Mars' been used?")

The documentary, titled *MAKING THE EARTH STAND STILL*, has no narrator. Instead, it presents a series of informative interviews with Robert Wise, producer Julian Blaustein, leading lady Patricia Neal, and Billy Gray, who played Neal's young son, Bobby. Director Joe Dante and master movie col-

lector Bob Burns also lend their expertise to the proceedings. After examining this myriad of treasures, I'm still not sure what "Klaatu . . . Borada . . . Nikto" means—but it's been fun making the effort!

**CREATURE DOUBLE FEATURE:  
REVENGE OF THE CREATURE &  
CREATURE WALKS AMONG US**

MCA/Universal

Sides 1, 3: CLV; Sides 2, 4: CAV

\$59.99

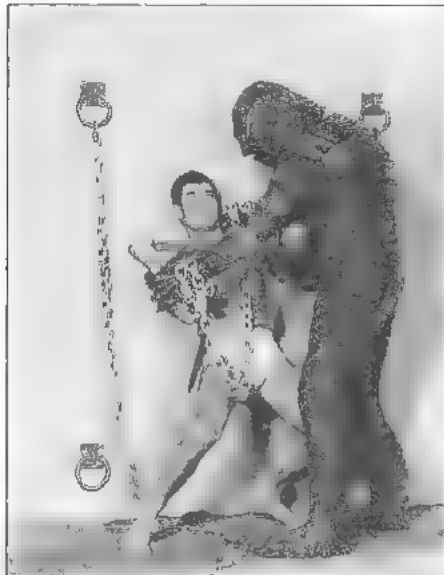
Here's yet another installment in MCA/Universal's ENCORE EDITION series, in which viewers receive a double dose of classic Universal horrors. This time out, it's the two sequels to *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* (1953): *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955) and *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US* (1956).

*REVENGE* begins in the Amazon jungle, the Gillman's old stomping (swimming?) grounds, where scientists from Florida's Ocean Harbor capture the Creature and bring him back to the Sunshine State for study. "Study" includes torturing the poor critter underwater with an electric cattle prod. Of course, it's not long before Gilly, taking as much of this abuse as he can stand, makes his big escape. Besides, he's got his eye on pretty Lori Nelson.

Never mind *FREE WILLY*, this is better, and in many respects just as good as the original *CREATURE*. (Maybe they should have called this one *FREE CREEPY*?) The picture and audio are simply glorious; nary a scratch or pop to be seen or heard. Clint Eastwood makes a brief appearance in Chapter 5 as a lab technician with a white rat in his pocket. (Don't ask!) It wouldn't be long before he replaced the rodent with a .357 Magnum.

In sharp contrast, *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US* seems more like an afterthought than a movie. Once again, intrepid "heroes" trek into the jungle to fetch the Gillman for study. Predictably, they find him, fight him, and capture him. This time, however, Dr. Barton (Jeff Morrow) wants to advance evolution and all that by conducting a few operations. The result is an air-breathing, clothes-wearing Gilly who all but breaks the viewer's heart. He's sort of like a defanged Dracula or a boltless Frankenstein Monster.

Jack Arnold, who helmed the first two installments, didn't direct this one, so maybe that's why it's not as good. There are some scratches in Chapter 3 and elsewhere, but nothing major. The picture and audio are



on a par with *REVENGE*. The set includes trailers for both films, plus 94 stills per picture. This excellent ENCORE EDITION is guaranteed to make a big splash with fans of ol' Blacky Lagoon. So don't just stand there—go soak your head!

**ED WOOD**

Touchstone Home Video

Sides 1, 2, and 3 CLV

\$39.99

I wasn't a bit surprised when *ED WOOD* (1994) bombed at the box office. With its crisp black and white photography and a bouncy, upbeat, bongo-beating soundtrack score, director Tim Burton has fashioned a loving homage for "B"-movie fans. I knew this was going to be a very special flick the minute I saw the opening shot of Criswell (the platinum-domed Jeffery Jones) rising from his deluxe coffin and gravely intoning, "Can your heart stand the shocking facts of the true story

of Edward D. Wood Jr.?" (Sound familiar, *PLAN 9* fans?)

I devoted a large part of last issue's column to Bela Lugosi in honor of Martin Landau winning an Oscar for his deft performance of Bela Lugosi in *ED WOOD*. (We'd also just received a load of Lugosi lasers, doubtless "unleashed" because of this very film.) While it's a joy to once again watch Landau's remarkable recreation of the faded horror star, there are other performances to revel in as well, such as Bill Murray's hilarious turn as Bunny Breckinridge, George "The Animal" Steele as Tor Johnson, and, of course, Johnny Depp's frantic, terminally optimistic Ed Wood.

Sight and sound, personified by Stefan Czapsky's vibrant photography and Howard Shore's award-caliber music, are both top drawer. No complaints with the side breaks, either; they're well placed.

There have been a lot of horror fans (myself included) who have given poor Ed Wood a hard time—and maybe he deserves it. Still, you gotta hand it to a guy who, regardless of his talent, has received the ultimate Hollywood recognition of fame, a big-screen biopic. Ol' Ed must be smiling down with pride from Angora Heaven.

**CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF**

MCA/Universal

Sides 1 and 2 CLV

\$34.99

A Hammer film released on laser by Universal? I hope this doesn't revive that infamous debate over which studio made better horror



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flicks! In any event, we should be grateful that somebody made this classic from the House of Hammer available

Originally, producer Anthony Hinds was going to make *THE RAPE OF SABENA*, a film about the Spanish Inquisition. A full-size set of a Spanish town had already been

built when the British censors voiced strong objections. After the project was cancelled, Hinds quickly wrote the script for *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*, based on Guy Endore's novel *The Werewolf of Paris* (1933), and changed the story's location to Spain so that *SABENA*'s standing sets could still be used

*CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF* begins with a simple beggar (Richard Wordsworth) being imprisoned by the cruel Marquis Sinestro (Anthony Dawson). Years later, after his enslavement has made him more animal than human, the beggar assaults a servant girl (Yvonne Romain). Things really get hairy when the girl gives birth to Leon (played as an adult by Oliver Reed), who has a nasty habit of howling at the full moon. The fur really flies, thanks to a good performance by Reed, who is helped immeasurably by Roy Ashton's fantastic werewolf makeup.

The laserdisc is a decent transfer, noticeably sharper and richer in color than the video release. The side break occurs after a natural fade on a shepherd standing over the mortally-wounded dog he (erroneously, of course) thinks has been killing his sheep.

There are 20 chapter listings, 10 to each side. The opening credits and the first few minutes of the movie occur while the chapter indicator reads "zero." *THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF* is, in all respects, a worthy successor to Universal's *Wolf Man* flicks of the 1940s. It's guaranteed to make your hair stand on end!

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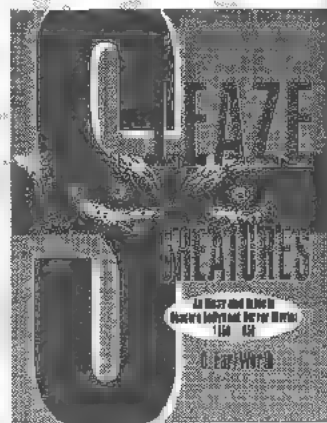
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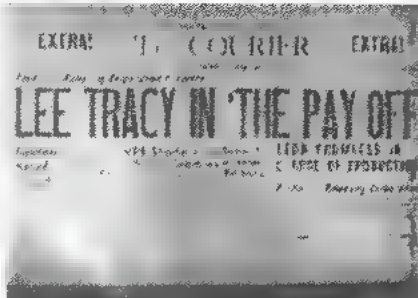
**THE MAGIC SWORD** (1962) Basil Rathbone, Gary Lockwood, Estelle Winwood, and Maile "Vampira" Nurmio in glorious Eastman color, which we hate. It's chemically unstable, so it turns red over a period of years. You can rebalance it on a video transfer so that it looks OK, but it never will look really good. Anyone who says this has "excellent color" is lying. We worked on this for hours to make it look decent. The movie is pretty cool, sort of a Harryhausen-style epic without the cool effects. Worth seeing just for the plot, but you'll enjoy the cast, too. \$14.95



**FLOOR SWEEPINGS CREATED WOMAN** — Yes, this is the dumbest title ever in this mammoth series. And we're already halfway through making the next one! (That'll be Floor Sweepings Must be Destroyed.) This has some really ultra-cool stuff on it. Here's the list:

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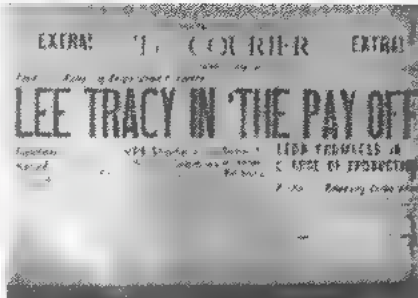
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Two of the finest ghost stories ever filmed, *THE INNOCENTS* (1961) and *THE HAUNTING* (1963) share much in common. Though each movie lets the viewer decide whether the ghosts exist as literal spirits of the dead, the haunted houses themselves become anthropomorphic. Hill House, a living being, can consume a resident. The many mirrors of both Hill House and Bly reflect another "house," in the sense of a (dysfunctional) family or the haunted corners of the human mind where specters of loneliness and fear of one's own desires lurk in secret. Each movie uses black and white film to atmospheric advantage and each arranges complex psychological drama around a simple plot.

Both films benefit from first-rate scripts based on exceptional novels. Nelson Gidding adapted Shirley Jackson's 1959 bestseller, *The Haunting of Hill House*, into the film script for *THE HAUNTING*. Coauthors William Archibald and Truman Capote wrote *THE INNOCENTS* as a stage play, based on the 1897 short novel, *The Turn of the Screw*, by Henry James. Archibald and Capote changed the title of their play, which became a Broadway hit, to avoid confusion with other adaptations. (Small World Department: *THE HAUNTING*'s Claire Bloom played the governess in a 1976 Broadway revival of *THE INNOCENTS*.) John Mortimer contributed additional scenes and dialogue for the film version. None of several later TV movies match the quality of the original.

Jack Clayton, director of *THE INNOCENTS*, won acclaim for his first short film, *THE BESPOKE OVERCOAT*, in 1955, after working his way up in the business from age 14. After his first feature film, *ROOM AT THE TOP* (1959), he made *THE PUMPKIN EATER* (1964) and *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES* (1983), among others. Clayton became fascinated with *The Turn of the Screw* after reading it as a child. He refused to reveal whether he thought the ghosts were real, feeling that leaving everything ambiguous, as Henry James did in the novel, let the audience make better use of its own imagination.

Robert Wise, director of *THE HAUNTING*, edited *CITIZEN KANE* (1941) and *THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS* (1942) for Orson Welles, then replaced Gunther von Fritsch as director of Val Lewton's *THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE* (1944). Wise directed many more films, including *THE BODY SNATCHER* (1945), *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951), *THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN* (1971), and *AUDREY ROSE* (1977). According to William K. Everson in *More Classics of the Horror Film* (Citadel, 1986), "Robert Wise has stated that while both of the stars, Claire Bloom and Julie Harris, had had paranormal experiences, and while the old house in which some of the film was shot, did have a 'bad' repu-

tation, he himself—much to his chagrin—had never had that kind of experience."

Both films boast top-quality casts, with strong female leads. Deborah Kerr as Miss Giddens in *THE INNOCENTS* and Julie Harris as Eleanor Lance (named Vance in the novel) in *THE HAUNTING* portray lonely, unmarried women who have devoted their lives to caring for other people. Harris made *THE HAUNTING* at age 38; the character is 32 in *The Haunting of Hill House*. In *THE INNOCENTS*, Deborah Kerr (at 40) looks lovely but wouldn't pass for 20, the age of the governess in *The Turn of the Screw*. Nevertheless, it's wise casting. The film needs a mature adult star in order to make the same points James made with someone younger in his 19th-century novel. Calling a 20-year-old a spinster, for example,

made sense to Victorians but would sound ludicrous in 1961.

In both the films and the novels, it's impossible to conclude whether the ghosts are real and the women sane or the ghosts are imaginary and the women mad. For that matter, each woman could be crazy and right, or sane and mistaken.

The occult investigator in *THE HAUNTING* uses next to no scientific method and takes no precautions against trickery. Anyone who has read Frank Podmore, L. Sprague deCamp, or the Amazing Randi (the stage magician who debunked spoon-bender Uri Geller) on the subject of occult fraud will realize that one or more of the Hill House ghost busters could have faked all the phenomena. From time to time, they accuse each other. The investigators also might suffer from overactive imaginations and group delusion.

In *THE INNOCENTS*, only the heroine sees the ghosts. The audience sees them through her eyes. All the other characters deny that the ghosts exist.

Both films did well at the box office and attracted mostly positive reviews. The naysayers divide almost equally between

those who gripe because the ghosts are real and those annoyed that the ghosts are not real. In *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film* (Paragon, 1979), Carlos Clarens makes an interesting comparison. He criticizes the way *THE HAUNTING* "unrolls an up-to-date rationale in the most current psychic jargon: these seemingly supernatural manifestations are . . . merely the projection of Eleanor's subconscious desires and jealousies, something like the destructive 'force of the id' in *FORBIDDEN PLANET*." One could make a similar point about *THE INNOCENTS*. However, the validity of their characters lets both movies transcend some dated psychobabble.

Each film emphasizes the heroine's isolation. Mrs. Dudley (Rosalie Crutchley), the gloomy Hill Housekeeper, welcomes Eleanor by warning that no servants stay after dark. "No one lives any closer than town. No





LEFT: What walks the halls of Hill House? Theodora (Claire Bloom), Luke (Russ Tamblyn), Eleanor (Julie Harris), and Dr. Markway (Richard Johnson) want to know. RIGHT: "This could be a family portrait of us."

one will come any closer than that. So no one will hear you if you scream. In the night. In the dark."

In *THE INNOCENTS*, the benevolent housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, also increases the heroine's isolation, by advising Miss Giddens not to tell the vicar "our secrets." She also counsels the governess not to bother their absent employer, who has warned his staff to leave him alone. He never even reads a letter telling him that his nephew has been expelled from school. He forwards the mail, unopened, to Miss Giddens, who, like Eleanor, finds herself alone in the dark.

The atmosphere of Gothic gloom comes from the Victorian roots shared by both stories. *THE HAUNTING*, a contemporary tale set in New England, takes place mostly in Hill House, a Victorian mansion built 90 years earlier by Hugh Crain, a nasty-minded misfit with a religious mania. Among the sad events in Hill House, Crain's young wife dies on her way to move in, when her carriage crashes into a tree. The second Mrs. Crain falls down the stairs to her death. Crain's daughter grows old as a recluse in her nursery, where she dies while tapping her

cane for help. The servant who failed to come when called hangs herself from the spiral staircase in the library.

The present owner, Mrs. Sanderson (Fay Compton), rents the haunted house reluctantly to Dr. John Markway (played by British stage and screen star Richard Johnson). John is an anthropologist and occult investigator.

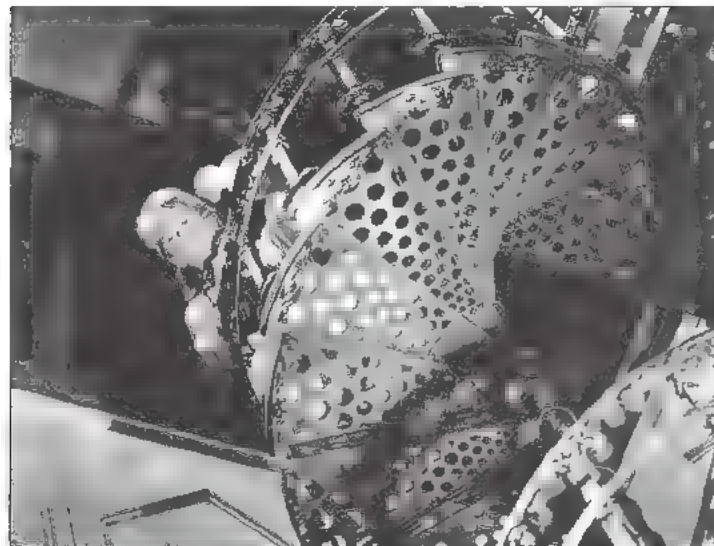
Mrs. Sanderson doesn't like the idea of John living at Hill House with female assistants and without his wife (She has to ask him whether he's married; John doesn't wear a wedding ring.) Mrs. Sanderson insists on calling in her young relative, Luke, to chaperone. Luke, a college man, will inherit Hill House someday. (The character is deftly performed by Russ Tamblyn, who worked with director Wise before, in 1961's *WEST SIDE STORY*.)

John chooses his two assistants for their previous paranormal experiences. Poltergeist manifestations swirled around Eleanor when she was 10. Theodora (played by Claire Bloom) scored high on ESP tests at Duke University.

At Hill House, the guests hear loud banging noises, howls, and other strange sounds, experience a "cold spot"

LEFT: Miles and Flora (Martin Stephens and Pamela Franklin) love their new governess (Deborah Kerr). RIGHT: Could two malevolent spirits be lurking behind the innocent faces of these two children?





**LEFT:** Dr. Markway and Eleanor (Richard Johnson and Julie Harris) take a break from ghost-breaking to perform an Astaire/Rogers routine. **RIGHT:** Eleanor almost takes a dive from the spiral staircase.

and witness poltergeist phenomena such as doors that slam shut, a harp that plays by itself, and ghostly graffiti. In the middle of the night, Eleanor thinks she's holding hands with Theo, but with the lights on, she realizes they're across the room from each other. "No one" is holding her hand!

Looking at a group of statues of St. Francis healing lepers, Theodora says, "This could be a family portrait of us." In this troubled family, Theodora calls Eleanor her sister, but tries to seduce her, although Eleanor probably isn't gay. Luke flirts with Theodora, who isn't straight. Eleanor, not realizing John is married, falls for him, while he prefers the role of father. It's all a big emotional mess.

Then Grace Markway (Lois Maxwell, aka Miss Moneybags in the James Bond films), John's skeptical wife, shows up. After several days away from her husband, Grace would rather spend the night alone in the most haunted room in the house than sleep with him. She disappears. The most vulnerable guest, Eleanor, becomes fatally distraught over her loneliness and unrequited love for John.

Eleanor transfers her obsession from John to the house, where she begs to stay. Grace has "taken her place" in Hill House, but "Mrs. Markway can't satisfy it. No one else can . . . She has my place. It isn't fair." Eleanor thinks her whole life isn't fair, and wishes she had a rightful place with John, too. She thinks, "I'm the one it really wants. Can't you feel it? It's alive, watching, waiting. Waiting for me."

When John won't let her stay, she crashes her car into the same tree where the first Mrs. Crain died. Maybe ghosts take the wheel, or maybe Eleanor is startled when Grace Markway, ghostly in pale clothes, suddenly darts in front of the car. Maybe Eleanor commits suicide. Her last thoughts are, "Why don't they stop me? Can't they see what is happening? But it's happening to you, Eleanor. Something at last is really, really, really happening to me." Hill House is now her permanent home.

Her disembodied voice says, "We who walk here walk alone."

In other words, nothing much has happened to Eleanor after all. She has always walked alone.

**LEFT:** Miss Giddens (Deborah Kerr) turns to the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose (Megs Jenkins), with her fears about the children. **RIGHT:** Is it merely a drop of water or the spilled tear of a love-starved ghost?





In *THE INNOCENTS*, set in Victorian England, Miss Giddens (Deborah Kerr) goes to work for a man (Michael Redgrave) who recently assumed guardianship of his orphaned niece and nephew. The uncle's estate of Bly, like Hill House, is isolated in the country. The governess has no companions except a few servants and the illiterate housekeeper, Mrs. Grose (Megs Jenkins), who, with her common sense, acts as a doubting commentator on Miss Giddens' interpretations of events.

At first, life at Bly seems idyllic. Then Miles (Martin Stephens), the 12-year-old boy, gets expelled from school and returns home. Miss Giddens becomes convinced that both Miles and his slightly younger sister, Flora (Pamela Franklin, in her film debut), are possessed by evil spirits. The ghost who haunts Miles is the former gamekeeper, Peter Quint (Peter Wyngarde), who may have been murdered. His lover, Miss Jessell (Clytie Jessop), the former governess, committed suicide after Quint died. The present governess believes Miss Jessell now inhabits Flora.

Miss Giddens is convinced that these "two . . . abominations," Quint and Jessell, "can only reach each other by entering the souls of the children and possessing them." (Unvoiced is the disquieting hint that, by acting out their love through the children, the ghosts have forced Miles and Flora into an incestuous relationship.) Mrs. Grose is skeptical, but the governess insists, "We must try to learn what it is these horrors want . . . the answer must lie in the past."

Miss Giddens decides that the only way to get rid of the ghosts is to force the children to admit that they're possessed. After scaring little Flora into one of the most incredible shrieking tantrums ever recorded on film ("screaming filth," Mrs. Grose says, although we don't hear exactly what Flora says), the governess sends the child away with the servants. Alone with Miles, Miss Giddens tries to drive out Peter Quint, but under the stress of this exorcism, the boy drops dead.

Both films use "ghosts" in the psychological sense. Rather than call Hill House haunted, John says it's "sick, crazy . . . deranged . . . born bad." To John, ghosts are spiritual aspects of humanity that could be cultivated to improve mankind. "No ghosts in all the long history of ghosts ever hurt anyone physically," he claims. "Fear alone can do the damage to the victim . . . especially if he doesn't believe that the supernatural exists." This odd reconciliation of rationalism with spiritualism serves John well: he's not the one who gets hurt.

Both *THE HAUNTING* and *THE INNOCENTS* seem surprisingly contrary. Both explore controversial sex, without endorsing cultural stereotypes. An anonymous reviewer of *THE HAUNTING* in *The Encyclopedia of Horror Movies* (Harper & Row, 1986) complains that "what haunts the movie is precisely the notion that les-

bianism is somehow unnatural and horrifying." On the contrary, all the characters but repressed, virginal Eleanor accept Theo. The others don't disparage her even though they discover she's gay. In fact, *Theodora* is one of very few sympathetic depictions of lesbians in films of the 1960s. It's Eleanor's attitude, not the "official" point of view of this movie, that is homophobic.

Socially retarded Eleanor goes to Hill House in part to meet people. "Journeys end in lovers meeting," she thinks. At first, she misunderstands what kind of sisterhood Theo offers, so she accepts it eagerly.

Theo in turn mistakes Eleanor's neediness for reciprocation. Eleanor doesn't understand herself, but on some level, she's attracted to Theo, a beautiful and well-groomed lesbian whose poise and class Eleanor envies. Theo responds by coming on a little stronger, testing, inviting herself into Eleanor's bedroom.

Finally Eleanor "gets it." In a classic (though understated) reaction, she all but slams her bedroom door in Theo's face. But then Eleanor starts flailing around in an approach-avoidance dance, rejecting one moment, then finding excuses to make physical contact the next. Often she's the one who takes the initiative—for example, by joining Theo in bed and holding her tight in mortal fear of ghostly noises. Julie Harris plays these scenes so subtly that it's impossible to know whether Eleanor acts out of desperation for contact, any contact, with another human being, or can only express sexual attraction by displacing it and pretending it's something else.

Eleanor says, "I've always been more afraid of being alone or being left out than of things that go bump in the night."

Theodora responds that she's afraid "of knowing what I really want." In context, this is a reference to her lesbianism. She looks at Eleanor meaningfully, as Eleanor looks uncomfortable.

Claire Bloom's Theodora can be a bitch, but not without a reason. Eleanor gives Theodora so many mixed messages that it's no wonder Theo gets fed up. Theo retaliates by making fun of Eleanor in front of the men. She calls "Nell" a bore for taking everything so seriously, exposes Eleanor's pathetic lies about her life and, in private, tells her she's making a fool of herself over John Markway. Theo finally pushes Eleanor too far.

Eleanor yells, "You revolt me! . . . The world is full of inconsistencies, unnatural things. Nature's mistakes, they're called. You, for instance!" Now Eleanor has said the unforgivable. The women never reconcile until the very end of the film, just before Eleanor dies.

Interestingly, the men like Theo and she likes them, although she won't put up with much sexist crap. Sometimes they give her the "little woman" treatment. By the standards of the 1960s, when what we call sexual ha-



rassment today was business as usual in the movies, this is very mild stuff. For instance, John calls the women "girls" and tells them to run along to bed now. Theo shrugs this incident off with a grimace, as a self-assured woman of 1995 might do.

However, Theo does have a double standard. She touches Eleanor a lot, sometimes in a patronizing way. Once she puts her hands on Eleanor's shoulders to turn her around and steer her out of a room as if she were a child. In the very next scene, Theodora watches jealously as Eleanor tries to catch John's eye. Luke plucks at Theodora's necklace gently. He's teasing, flirting, making a gesture of literally jerking her chain. He trails his fingers over her shoulder as she smacks him away.

She snaps, "Keep your hands to yourself!" This is a big overreaction. There's no reason she should get so mad at Luke for this slight touch when she thinks it's all right to touch Eleanor.

John, who hasn't been watching, asks, "What's going on?"

Luke looks at Theo, then at Eleanor, then at John. He says, "Oh-ho, more than meets the eye." He has figured out the love triangle. His eyes glinting with amusement, he shuts up, keeping whatever he thinks to himself.

This is fine work by Russ Tamblyn, who has a difficult role-within-a-role as a young man whistling past the graveyard in his cynical pose. His only interest in Hill House is its property value, he claims, yet the viewer can see that there's more to Luke than meets the eye. When Eleanor dies, he says that his "valuable" Hill House ought to be burned down and the ground sowed with salt.

Theo can't stay mad at Luke. They exchange wry, conspiratorial glances as they watch Eleanor maneuver around John and Grace. Luke and Theo respect each other. This relationship could easily have been played as the ugly stereotype of man-hating lesbian versus womanizing college boy, but instead, these characters have depth. They're ahead of their time for 1963, several years before the consciousness-raising of Women's Lib and Gay Pride.

Acceptance of a more sinister sexuality leads to harmful consequences in *THE INNOCENTS*, however, where Miss Giddens protests over and over, "All I want to do is save the children, not destroy them!" This childless spinster says, rather too often, "More than anything, I love children." Pederasts usually do love children. Unfortunately, since the governess looks proper, covers her inner turmoil with a mask of serenity, and mouths the motherly platitudes expected of a "goodly" Victorian woman, Mrs. Grose and the uncle trust her, with disastrous results. Kerr's low-key performance lets the horror build as the viewer slowly figures out that she's as tormented as the children.

As in *THE HAUNTING*, the physical house is not a home for a "normal" family. The orphaned children's uncle doesn't live with them at Bly. Without explanation, he says he lives a life that children shouldn't witness. He admits that he's selfish: "I have no room for them, neither mentally nor emotionally. Does that seem quite heartless?"

Yes, it does.

Miss Giddens, a mother-substitute, seems never to have had a relationship with a man. She doesn't know how to initiate one. When trouble starts, she toys with reasons to approach the dashing uncle. "I know, he'll think I'm insane, or that it's some stupid trick to get him to notice me . . ." Telling observation, this! She does wish he would notice her. But she never makes it happen even though Miles' expulsion from school would give her a good reason to contact the man.

Faced with her first serious problem, the governess fails to act responsibly. All the school says in the expulsion letter is that Miles can't stay because he's "an injury to the others." That could mean almost anything, from the trivial to the dire. Is he whispering in class? Cussing? Smoking? Fighting? Raping other boys? Nobody ever asks. Miss Giddens interprets the letter to mean that the school thinks Miles can "contaminate" or "corrupt." These words are loaded with sexual connotations, yet she doesn't hesitate to apply them to a little boy before she's even met him.

Mrs. Grose laughs and says, "Are you afraid he'll contaminate you?" Famous last words!

Later, when the 40-year-old woman kisses the 12-year-old boy long and intensely on the mouth, twice (the second time after he's

dead), one's skin crawls. The first kiss takes place moments after she plumps his pillow and discovers that it conceals a dead pigeon with its neck broken. He claims he's "keeping it warm" and will bury it in the morning. This is bizarre, yet she hardly questions him. She's got a vested interest in keeping him weird, because his weirdness gives her excuses for her own strange behavior.

Interestingly, the preadolescent child, not the adult, initiates this relationship. He demands, "Kiss me good-night," at an age when many boys awaken sexually but squirm in embarrassment from a matronly embrace. He may be the one who prolongs that first kiss, but she fails to break it off before it goes too far. Her troubled, guilty expression afterwards says she's lost her own innocence, now, but who has corrupted whom?

Miss Giddens excuses herself by blaming the ghost of Peter Quint. She's been kissing the ghost of an adult, hiding in a child's body. That awful ghost fooled her. It's not her fault. And she has a point, because Quint probably did teach Miles his tricks. Sexual abuse sometimes





**LEFT:** Eleanor (Julie Harris) has never belonged anywhere, until she came to Hill House. Nevertheless, Dr. Markway (Richard Johnson) is determined to send her packing. **RIGHT:** Eleanor cowers in the arms of Theodora (Claire Bloom) as something batters away at the bedroom door.

perpetuates itself from one generation to the next. Quint lives on in Miles' abnormality.

Quint, a sadist, battered the previous governess, Miss Jessell, who nevertheless grieved for him so hard that she committed suicide after he died. Mrs. Grose says, "Love? I suppose that's what she called it, but it was more like a sickness . . . There was no cruelty she wouldn't suffer. If he struck her—oh yes, and I've seen him knock her to the floor—she'd look at him as though she wanted the weight of his hand. No pride. No shame. Crawl to him on her hands and knees she would, and him laughing at her . . . A person ought to keep quiet about it."

Pressed for specifics, Mrs. Grose reveals, "Rooms, used by daylight, as if they were dark woods." Quint and Jessell let Mrs. Grose see them in action. Although mere fornication doesn't seem so shocking by late 20th-century standards, Mrs. Grose also thinks that Quint deliberately exposed adult sex to the children. The evil sorcerer initiated his apprentices into the mysteries. "That poor little boy worshipped Quint . . . Such power he had over people. You can't blame the child. A lonely boy with no father—Quint took advantage, that's all. It made me sick to see Miles trotting after him like a little dog." Quint "had his way" with the children. Now the boy behaves like an abuse victim who eases his sense of helplessness by emulating his abuser.

Miles spots the virginal and professionally inexperienced new governess as an easy victim. From the start, precocious Miles patronizes Miss Giddens in a haughty "adult" tone and calls her "my dear." He doesn't sound innocent when he says, "I feel quite the master of the house." He talks about her looks in a jaded way that's not natural for a preadolescent boy, repeating seductive come-on lines such as, "I think you're far too young and pretty to be a governess."

Unlike Mrs. Grose, who won't let kids get away with "stuff and nonsense," this vulnerable governess can't cope. She never even tells Miles not to speak to her disrespectfully. "You're hurting me!" she protests when he

sneaks up from behind during a game of hide-and-seek and hugs her much too hard around the neck. The expression on his face turns from mischievous to fiendish. Despite their difference in size and strength, she struggles (or pretends to struggle) so feebly that he doesn't let go until Flora interrupts.

Martin Stephens at age 12 gives a superb, professional performance in *THE INNOCENTS*. It helps that he's handsome and the perfect age for the part. He's a believably seductive boy, but young enough for people to find his precocity disturbing. Casting an older child would have diminished the abnormality of Miles's erotic relationship with his governess. Not many boys as young as Stephens could have handled this extremely demanding script, with dialogue written in a high level of diction and much going on between the lines. Director Clayton shows his respect by training the camera on Stephens for reaction shots as often as he does the adult actors.

Both films use architecture, buildings, as metaphors for the characters' aberrations. Eleanor's first impression of Hill House is that it's "vile," a word she later repeats many times. "It's waiting for me, evil, patient—waiting." To some extent, this impression of vileness reflects the taste of the 1950s and early 1960s, when discarded Thomas Kendall chairs sold for \$10 at Salvation Army stores. Architects and decorators went mad for Bauhaus, tossed Tiffany lamps in the trash, and considered Victorian architecture ghastly.

However, Hill House is worse than just old-fashioned. "It was an evil house from the beginning, a house that was born bad," says the ghost hunter, Dr. Markway, true to his name as he marks the way with his opening narration. Eleanor sees her face reflected over and over again in the highly polished wood floor and in the many mirrors. The building reflects back what goes on in her twisted mind.

Faithful to the description in Jackson's novel, Wise films the real house used in many of the scenes from odd

*Continued on page 53*



# Charm and Innocents Deborah Kerr

Text and Interview by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley

**T**HE INNOCENTS (1961) owes much of its haunting power to the sympathetic yet ultimately chilling performance of Deborah Kerr as Miss Giddens. The Scottish-born actress, a former ballet dancer, made her screen debut in MAJOR BARBARA in 1941, the beginning of a long career that earned her six Oscar nominations. Her more than 40 films include THE HUCKSTERS (1947), KING SOLOMON'S MINES (1950), QUO VADIS (1951), THE PRISONER OF ZENDA (1952), JULIUS CAESAR and FROM HERE TO ETERNITY (both 1953), TEA AND SYMPATHY and THE KING AND I (both 1956), SEPARATE TABLES (1958), BELOVED INFIDEL (1959), THE SUNDOWNERS (1960), THE CHALK GARDEN (1963), THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA (1964), CASINO ROYALE (1967), and THE ARRANGEMENT (1969). Of particular interest to *Scarlet Streeters* are her performances in the classic BLACK NARCISSUS (1947) and the unfortunately not-so-classic EYE OF THE DEVIL (1967).

In EYE OF THE DEVIL, a horror thriller directed by J. Lee Thompson, Kerr stars as the wife of a Bordeaux vineyard owner, the Marquis de Bellac (frequent costar David Niven). The Marquis has decided that he can only stop a three-year famine by offering himself as a pagan blood sacrifice to improve the grape harvest. The excellent cast includes Donald Pleasence, Edward Mulhare, Flora Robson, Emlyn Williams, Sharon Tate, David Hemmings, and John LeMesurier. Deborah Kerr gives a winning performance as the frightened but determined wife who jeopardizes her own life to try to save her husband's. Unfortunately, in a savage prerelease cut-and-

paste session, American censors mangled the movie's continuity. EYE OF THE DEVIL gained a dubious measure of fame when rumors spread that the production had a curse on it.

In a recent interview, Deborah Kerr told *Scarlet Street*: "I have no particular recollections of making EYE OF THE DEVIL—although, of course, I do remember making it. As always, it was a pleasure to

allowed her to play a wide variety of roles, from demure spinsters (most memorably in SEPARATE TABLES and NIGHT OF THE IGUANA) to sex-starved temptresses (personified by that salty scene on the beach with Burt Lancaster in FROM HERE TO ETERNITY?) But perhaps Kerr was at her best playing quiet, reserved characters whose dignified demeanor held something inside,

something these women didn't want the whole world to find out about them.

BLACK NARCISSUS is excellent film noir based on a novel by Rumer Godden. Directed, produced, and written by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, this lush Technicolor production (1947) takes place in a convent school in the Himalayas. Kerr plays Sister Clodagh, the outwardly calm Sister Superior in an order of Anglican nuns. Soon the discipline of the convent begins to break down in this exotic environment. The audience learns that Sister Clodagh entered religious orders because her lover abandoned her. Unwelcome memories of the man still torture her. While struggling to maintain her self-control, she loses command of the situation as one disaster follows another. Two young pupils (Jean Simmons and Sabu) elope. Sister Ruth (Kathleen

Byron) goes dangerously mad, dolls herself up in sexy clothes, and throws herself at a cynical man (David Farrar) who has predicted the school's failure. The story mirrors the conflict in Sister Clodagh's mind between religious vocation and earthly passion.

*Scarlet Street* asked Kerr if she saw similarities between Sister Clodagh in BLACK NARCISSUS and Miss Giddens in THE INNO-



Deborah Kerr

work with David Niven. The film really did seem to be jinxed, however—or rather, the people and the places involved with it. Sharon Tate was, of course, murdered by the Manson gang in 1969, one member of the location crew was crushed by a car, and the castle of Brives les Gaillards was burned down about three years later."

Nothing so drastic happened to Deborah Kerr, whose versatility



**LEFT:** "Shall we dance?" asks Sister Clodagh (Deborah Kerr) of her beautiful young charge (Jean Simmons) in *BLACK NARCISSUS* (1947). No, wait a minute—that's gotta be the wrong movie. **RIGHT:** "Shall we dance?" asks the King of Siam (Yul Brynner) and Mrs. Anna (Deborah Kerr) sings it right back at him (with a voice supplied by Marni Nixon) in the classic Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein musical *THE KING AND I* (1956).

**CENTS.** "Not really. Sister Clodagh in *NARCISSUS* was straightforward and not repressed. However, it was up to the audience to decide."

Miss Giddens, the governess in *THE INNOCENTS*, must try to live with a darker passion than Sister Clodagh's. She loves children, but with such a strange fervor that the audience (at least a modern-day one) begins to suspect her of a pedophilic obsession. Deborah Kerr takes great pride in what is considered one of the classics of the horror film. "*THE INNOCENTS* is an intriguing, and indeed frightening movie, and I regard it as one of my personal favorites."

Though it hints at child molestation and incest, and contains a sexually-charged, lingering kiss between Kerr and the frighteningly precocious Martin Stephens, *THE INNOCENTS* did not suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous censorship heaped on *EYE OF THE DEVIL* and *BLACK NARCISSUS* . . .

**Deborah Kerr:** Jack Clayton directed the film in an ambiguous manner and let the audience make up their minds about all the characters. No—there were no cuts or censorship problems.

**Scarlet Street:** But there's certainly some controversial material, such as the

*erotic kiss between the adult governess and the preadolescent Miles. That must have been a shocker.*

**DK:** Martin Stephens was quite brilliant in the role. I was amazed at his talent in one so young. It was up to the viewers to have their opinions on the expressions of both the boy and Miss Giddens.

**SS:** As to whether Miles is actually possessed by the ghost of the adult Quint, or it's all in the mind of the governess.

**DK:** I felt the only way to portray Miss Giddens was to play it straight and then let the audience interpret it themselves. It was very interesting how varied the opinions were.

**SS:** Were you familiar with the Henry James novella before you made *THE INNOCENTS*?

**DK:** I had read *The Turn of the Screw* many times, and seen a wonderful production in London, on the stage, so I was excited at the offer to film it with Jack Clayton directing.

**SS:** Three different scriptwriters Truman Capote, John Mortimer, and William Archibald worked on the screenplay for *THE INNOCENTS*. Whose was the major contribution?

**DK:** I think John Mortimer gave the best interpretation, but William Archibald and Truman Capote contributed a great deal.

**SS:** Was it difficult working with such young children?

**DK:** Both Pamela Franklin and Martin Stephens were brilliantly directed by Clayton, and we worked together very easily. It is always slightly dangerous working with children—or dogs—as they are wonderful scene stealers!

**SS:** Luckily, you didn't have to contend with a possessed pooch. What was it like to work with Jack Clayton?

**DK:** Clayton was a remarkable and gentle director and a joy to work with. Rehearsals were always fascinating. The film took 16 weeks to shoot, and I was virtually in every scene! You can imagine how tired I was by the time shooting was completed!

**SS:** One last question. What's your most vivid memory of making *THE INNOCENTS*?

**DK:** I remember when we were on location in the gardens. I was sitting in the arbor on what was ostensibly a lovely summer day and it was freezing cold! I sat with my gown spread out around me. Underneath it were three hot water bottles in order to keep my teeth from chattering! On film, with strong lighting, it appeared that Miss Giddens was basking in the glorious sunshine. That little scene is part of the magic of moviemaking.



## THE HAUNTING AND THE INNOCENTS

*Continued from page 50*

angles to make it look as if there are no square corners anywhere. In her novel, which she wrote shortly before sinking into such severe agoraphobia that for months she feared to leave her bedroom, Jackson explains that Hill House "had an unbelievably faulty design which left it chillingly wrong in all its dimensions . . ." Doors shut by themselves. The library stairs lead nowhere, except to a little balcony that seems to exist solely to provide a place for people to hang themselves, or fall.

As Stephen King points out in *Danse Macabre* (Everest House, 1981), her description evokes H. P. Lovecraft's notion that "bad" architecture can derange the human mind. Eleanor says, "No wonder it's impossible to find your way around. Add up all those wrong angles and you get one big distortion in the house as a whole." The same applies to the characters.

Eleanor feels not only overwhelmed but actually devoured by this lonely, hungry house. "I'm like a small creature swallowed whole by a monster, and the monster feels my tiny movements inside," Eleanor thinks. When the poltergeist scribbles on the walls beckon, "Help Eleanor Come Home," she fears the house wants to absorb her, but at the same time, she wants to be absorbed, to belong somewhere. In *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror* (Oxford University Press, 1980), S. S. Prawer goes so far as to call Hill House "the most memorable character in the film."

In *THE INNOCENTS*, Miss Giddens wanders through Bly in scenes similar to those of Eleanor roaming Hill House. The governess loses herself in a maze of corridors

and stairways where inanimate objects take on lives of their own. A creepy clown puppet nods its head. A music box plays by itself, the way the harp plays by itself in Hill House. In forlorn, closed-up parts of Bly, ghostly voices echo in rooms cluttered with toys and furniture left behind like old memories in the secret places of the mind. Like Eleanor, Miss Giddens jumps with fright as the many mirrors throw back her own reflection.

When the governess, her pretty body rigid in a Victorian corset, first arrives at Bly (after growing up in a tiny house, she says, with no privacy for secrets), pale roses in a bouquet drop their petals at her gentle touch. Once again, Bly reflects its occupant. The ruined flowers reflect the truth about her. They hint of the havoc she will wreak.

Stairways, with their patterns of light and shadow, so effective in black and white film, add to the atmosphere of both movies. Wise and his cinematographer, Davis Boulton, make especially evocative use of the wrought iron spiral stairs in *THE HAUNTING*. The spiral shape is a primal concept, dating back to ancient cave paintings. Shamanistic and spiritualist practitioners all over the world still use the spiral (deliberately: this is not some anthropological or post-Freudian interpretation) as a

*Continued on page 110*







## BEWARE THE EYES!

# MARTIN STEPHENS

interviewed by Jessie Lilley

It doesn't take much for a child star to scare the hell out of some movie fans. The mere thought of Shirley Temple or Macaulay Culkin is enough to send many adults screaming into the night. These people would rather spend the rest of their lives home alone than chance hearing one more chorus of "On the Good Ship Lollipop."

Some horror movie fans even contend that nothing Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Basil Rathbone, or Lionel Atwill did in *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939) compares to the sheer terror generated by the sight and sound of child actor Donnie Dunagan, who played Rathbone's curly-haired, southern-fried sonny boy. (Oh, that the Monster had been just a tad quicker getting the annoying little brat into that sulphur pit!)

But there was one child actor who frightened the world intentionally, one small, angel-faced, quietly polite little tyke who chilled the spines of audiences everywhere: Martin Stephens!

In *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (1960), Martin was David Zellaby, the leader of a group of blonde-haired, blonde-eyed children from God knows where, the frightening result of the "impossible" impregnation of the women of the sleepy little English hamlet of Midwich. How the darling child's eyes positively glowed whenever he wanted something!

Then there was young Miles in *THE INNOCENTS* (1961), an adorable child who just may have harbored the malignant spirit of the family gamekeeper, Quint. Certainly, his kisses were those of a grown man!

Martin Stephens left acting decades ago to pursue a highly successful career as an architect. Recently, he gave this exclusive interview to *Scarlet Street*, discussing his career as an actor and his subsequent life. He was charming and, naturally, quietly polite. Scared the hell out of us!



*Scarlet Street: You are an architect, now, aren't you?*

**Martin Stephens:** That's right.

**SS:** And you travel all over the world as an architect?

**MS:** Actually no. I'm based here in Portugal, and live much of my time here. I do odd bits of work in England, but most of it is here in Portugal. What takes me around the world is, actually, my wife and I are meditation teachers. We've been practicing for 14 or 15 years. About seven years ago, we were appointed by the main teacher as assistant teachers, to conduct courses on his behalf.

**SS:** What discipline is it?

**MS:** It's a meditation called Vipassana. You have several centers in America in the same tradition. It's an old Indian word from about two and a half thousand years ago. The modern translation of the word is "insight."

**SS:** Well, now, and here we thought . . .

**MS:** Adds a new dimension, doesn't it? I qualified back in 1974 as an ar-

chitect, having done my seven years training. I worked in that for a long time, but then my wife and I began to get interested in this meditation. We took our first courses in England, back around '80. We found that it was really very good, very beneficial in daily life, and just spent more time doing it. But alongside that, of course, I keep all my household duties together and keep a practice together.

**SS:** How and why did you become an actor? Did your family have a theatrical background?

**MS:** Well, in a way, yes. My mother left home when she was 16. She came from Yorkshire, and very rapidly she got involved in the stage as a dancer; she was quite a good dancer. In the war years, she married. Then my two sisters—actually twin sisters; they're a couple of years older than me when they were nearly three, they wanted to have dancing lessons. They went to a dancing school which was also an acting agency on the out-

skirts of London. Because they were only three, they needed collecting from school every day. By that time I was a baby, about three months old, and I went up with my mum every day to collect the girls. Little by little, the agency got to know me and began to ask if I would do modeling jobs. Then, when I was four, they asked if I'd go for an audition for an actual film. I did and I got the part. I never intended to go into filming. Well, certainly, I never intended. (Laughs) I don't know if my mother did, but I never intended it!

**SS:** What was the film?

**MS:** The film was called *THE DIVIDED HEART*, with Virginia McKenna.

**SS:** Was there a feeling on your part, even at that age, of competition with other child actors of the period?

**MS:** No, not at all. I never really felt I was competing. I had a very different situation, because I never went to stage school. I just went to an ordinary preparatory school who were very tolerant, and gave me time off to





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**LEFT:** Between takes on *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (1960), Martin Stephens challenged George Sanders to chess—and won! **RIGHT:** Filming the blood-curdling climax of *THE INNOCENTS* (1961) with Deborah Kerr.

do films as I needed it. I never really felt much in the way of competition. I think I was fairly lighthearted about my career; I didn't take it too seriously. In the long term, I never really intended to stay in it, anyway. It's just something I happened to fall into and enjoyed greatly when I did it, and I was quite happy when I left it.

**SS:** Did you have a say in your career?

**MS:** No. Never. It's just that, if parts happened to come up and they were suitable, then generally I would do them as long as I could square it with my school.

**SS:** What other films did you make during this period?

**MS:** In 1956, I made a film called *LAW AND DISORDER* with Robert Morley and Michael Redgrave. Robert Morley was a hoot. He was quite eccentric, but a very, very nice man. And then, next year, 1957, was *ANOTHER TIME ANOTHER PLACE*. It was a difficult film to make, because there was quite a lot of tension between Lana Turner and Glynis Johns. I'd say it was much more on Glynis Johns' side, mainly because of the size of the part. Sean Connery and I used to hide in the corner while they had their arguments. (Laughs) Because they'd run so far overtime on that film, they had to hurriedly finish my part, because I'd gone 'way over contract. I had to go do *HARRY BLACK* in India. It was done with Stewart Granger, Anthony Steel, Barbara Rush. Barbara Rush was really sweet to me.

**SS:** *COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS* was with Deborah Kerr, whom you later appeared with in *THE INNOCENTS*.

**MS:** I really enjoyed working with her, because—if I dare say this—I've

never thought she was a particularly wonderful actress, but she's certainly a wonderful person. A very, very nice person. Very considerate, very kind, really warm to me. Extremely good with all the people on the set. She has an amazing memory. She could remember almost anyone she'd worked with, whether they were a chippie or a star. Incredible lady, in that sense.

**SS:** You were 10 when you made *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*. Did you have a full grasp of the character of David and the implications of his alien existence?

**MS:** Yes, I think I did, really. With most of these parts, it was mainly my mother who chaperoned me. It was part of the contract, usually, that she should be my chaperone rather than entrusting me to someone else. She helped me go through my script and would explain parts I didn't understand. I would say, with *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, I didn't have any real problem understanding.

**SS:** What direction did Wolf Rilla give you and the other children in order to make you behave so unemotionally?

**MS:** Wolf Rilla was actually a very good director. A very clear director, and a patient one. He was able to clearly explain the sort of characters that he wanted, and it was somehow a part that quite suited me. I just quite got into that type of part. I would say that, where there were good directors in the films that I worked in, I was generally quite a good actor. Where there were poor directors, I wasn't so good. (Laughs) In other words, I was directable. I was malleable. It's interesting that, when the film was finished, I got a

letter from John Wyndham, just saying how delighted he was with the end product and thanking me for my participation in it, and saying that, like any author, he had his misgivings at how it was going to transpose into film. That was interesting, because I'm sure there are many, many authors who are not pleased.

**SS:** Stephen King, for one.

**MS:** (Laughs) Yes! Actually, quite rarely do films do books justice. But somehow, *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* just caught peoples' imaginations—in its time. Of course, it's very dated now. Also, it signaled the time when I got a lot of interest and mail and contact from other people. From filmgoers around the world.

**SS:** How were you able to handle all the attention?

**MS:** Quite calmly, really. My sisters were also in the business, though not to such great degree, and I think, in order to keep us reasonably sane, our mother was very, very strict. We weren't really allowed to develop egos. And I'm pleased, because I think we could have very easily ended up as the obnoxious children you hear about. I think, in general, we weren't. I mean, sure, there were times when I found my mother almost over-disciplinary, but, given that I was in such a tough business where ego is everything, I think I was pretty glad for that discipline.

**SS:** Much publicity was made of you and George Sanders playing chess between scenes on *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*.

**MS:** (Laughs) It was true, actually. I don't know if we played a lot. Maybe they exaggerated the amount that



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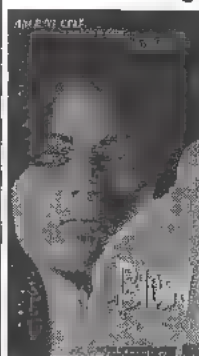
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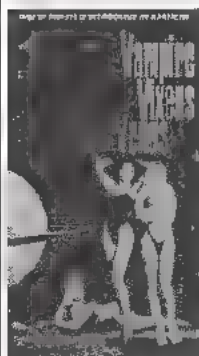
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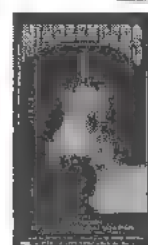
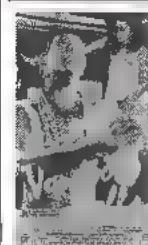
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**ABOVE and PAGE 59:** Is Miles (Martin Stephens) merely an innocent young boy or is he possessed by the spirit of the sexually depraved Quint? Miss Giddens (Deborah Kerr) sees ghosts behind *THE INNOCENTS* (1961).

we played, but I did play and I was actually very keen on chess.

**SS:** *What was Sanders like?*

**MS:** Well, he was quite a depressive man, and eventually ended his own life. He really was quite introverted and I didn't have a great deal of contact with him. Because he was quite a depressive person, I think he found it difficult to come out of himself and relate to other people. Completely the opposite to, say, Barbara Shelley, who's so warm and so open and so on. I'm not criticizing George Sanders, but I'm just saying he was that type of personality.

**SS:** *But Barbara Shelley was . . .*

**MS:** Oh, she was delightful! Through the years, I've often had messages come through from her via other people, giving all her best wishes.

**SS:** *In the movie, the Midwich townspeople are all afraid of the children. Was there any effort to keep the two groups of actors separate in order to maintain that distrust?*

**MS:** No. We were mucking around and having our cups of tea and dinners on location and communicating with each other quite normally. In those days, they didn't take it to that extreme of trying to maintain it off camera.

**SS:** *Was there much competition for the role of Miles in *THE INNOCENTS*?*

**MS:** Yes, there was. I can't remember all the preliminary stages, but I know I had many screen tests for that part. There was one other boy who quite often would be competing for the same part as I was. We were similar in age and looks, and I think in the end it boiled down to us two. We had something like five or six screen tests, which is a lot, and they were hovering between him—because he was taller than me and more suited to the age of the boy—and me, simply because I'd had quite a lot of experience. In the end they opted for me because of the experience, although physically there were defi-

nately shortcomings—'cause I was very short.

**SS:** *How did you get along with Pamela Franklin, who played your sister?*

**MS:** Very well. She was good fun. It was really like working with a sister. When I was on the London stage in *OLIVER!* a while later, she came and saw me and we spent the evening together. It was very nice, very nice to work with her.

**SS:** *Do you think *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* and *THE INNOCENTS* typecast you as a precocious child?*

**MS:** Good question. I don't know, actually. I suppose quite a lot of my parts were precocious children, come to think of it.

**SS:** *And were you yourself wise beyond your years?*

**MS:** I wouldn't necessarily use the word wise. I would say I was well trained; I could at least seem to be quite adult.

**SS:** *How sophisticated were you as a child? Did you have any idea of the sex-*

ual motivations for Miss Giddons' interest in Miles in *THE INNOCENTS*?

MS: Now that's an extremely good question! Actually, no, I didn't. I was quite innocent, really, to the sexual side of things, so the film's quite well named. That was the one part of the film—if you remember the kiss—it was the one part of the film that I never understood while I was making it. Jack Clayton was definitely the best director I worked with. Incredibly patient. Very sensitive. And I remember he just said, "Well, this is what I want you to do. Just do it." Whereas in almost any other case, he would very carefully explain why and how and so on. In this case, I really couldn't understand it, so he had to simply direct me and tell me what to do.

SS: It looked as though you knew exactly what was going on.

MS: I was very directable, and with such a good director as Jack Clayton, well, that shows. He brought out two very good performances from two quite young children.

SS: Were you or the rest of the cast in any way unsettled by the supernatural and sexual subject matter of *THE INNOCENTS*?

MS: I don't think so. I was quite down to earth, really, and I don't think I got at all disturbed. I don't think I got disturbed by the subject matter of the films I made. Again, this is quite a good question, because some years later I was asked to play the lead part in *LORD OF THE FLIES*. It was decided, mainly by my agent and I think in conjunction with my mother, to actually refuse the part for me. I don't even know if I was consulted. It was felt to be a bit unsuitable. Well, you know the story. It is a true horror story. In the end, the film was made by unknowns, people who had not been in acting before, because they found casting it with people in the business quite difficult.

SS: What is your interpretation of *THE INNOCENTS*? Is it all a product of Miss Giddons' imagination, or are the children really possessed?

MS: I think the strength of the story is in the ambiguity, that one neither decides one way or the other. In Henry James' book, that's even more strongly suggested than in the film. I fall very much in the middle. I would say neither was it entirely her imagination, nor would I say the kids were possessed. I think it's the

ambiguity of the story that is its real power.

SS: Did British censorship in the 1960s preclude your seeing your own movies?

MS: Yes.

SS: Then when did you finally catch up with them?

MS: I snuck into *THE INNOCENTS* when I was 15 years old. (Laughs.) I went with someone older. In fact, I think he was my tutor! I actually had to wait three or four years to see *THE INNOCENTS*!

SS: Now, *THE DEVIL'S OWN*...

MS: When you say *DEVIL'S OWN*, we must have known that by another



title. Would that picture have been *THE WITCHES*?

SS: Yes. Was that your last film?

MS: It was. I was 16 and I had already taken O levels, which is like preliminary exams that we had in those days in England. I was already moving on to A levels, which gives you your university entrance. I was given a special dispensation just to go out for a few days and make *THE WITCHES*.

SS: The role is relatively minor. Were you disappointed in its size?

MS: Oh, no! Not at all. If it had been major, I wouldn't have been able to take the part at all, because I just couldn't take that amount of time off school. I only did 10 or 12 days of filming, and it was only odd days at that.

SS: Why was it your last film? Because of your schooling?

MS: Absolutely. By then, I had made the decision that I was going to carry on with my education and go on to university.

SS: Many child actors go through an awkward period when they become teenagers. Did you have difficulty finding work?

MS: Well, it didn't really affect me. I got out of films when I was still being offered several, and I was refusing them. But you're right—it is often a very difficult transition; that transition is actually nigh on impossible. That was one of the practical reasons why I didn't carry on in films. It's extremely difficult to transfer from being a well-known child actor into an adult. I mean, look at Hayley Mills! With all the family backing that she had and the success as a child, she never really made it as an adult actress.

SS: Not in films, anyway. Any regrets about leaving show business?

MS: Generally not. I must tell you that, after I'd done three years of training in architecture, and I was beginning to feel the length of it—seven years is a long training in any profession—I was beginning to think, "Oh! This is more than hard!" (Laughs) When I was 21, I vaguely flirted with the idea of trying to get back into the business. But it was a very mild thing and I didn't seriously try.

SS: Any regrets about being part of show business?

MS: No, no serious regrets at all. I would say there are side effects which obviously has an effect on your upbringing. For

instance, you don't mix with children of your own age in the normal way. I had very, very few actual child friendships, mainly because I was never around. I was either at school or abroad making films or on set at Pinewood or at MGM. In that sense, it wasn't a normal childhood. Also, I think, just the ability to play—to be playful is something I find fairly difficult as well. None of this is desperately harmful, but I see it as a by-product of having that sort of childhood. Otherwise I





Hammer's 1966 production **THE DEVIL'S OWN** (also known as **THE WITCHES**) featured Martin Stephens as a teenager disposed of for threatening the virginity of a sacrificial Ingrid Brett.

had great fun doing the films, really! I mean, they were very tiring, sometimes; I even think I had a physical breakdown on one of them. I was just overtired. That was **COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS**. That was in Paris and Hollywood. In a physical sense, they could be very demanding, particularly as I was trying to maintain my education. Most kids in film really ditched their education completely, and just fulfilled the absolute minimum, whereas I was doing three hours schooling a day, plus all the filming.

**SS:** No wonder you were tired!

**MS:** And then you've got to learn your part at the end of the day for the next day's shooting. It was a demanding life, no doubt of it.

**SS:** **THE DEVIL'S OWN** was a Hammer film.

**MS:** Really, I had hardly any connection with the studio at all. Almost all my days of shooting were out on location. Don't ask me where!

**SS:** We won't.

**MS:** Thank you! (Laughs)

**SS:** You've worked with such screen legends as Deborah Kerr, Joan Fontaine, and George Sanders. Have you a favorite—or non favorite?

**MS:** Amongst favorites, I would number Barbara Rush and Deborah Kerr, certainly, and Barbara Shelley. They're mostly women, actually; that's interesting. (Laughs) Probably

that's not so surprising, really, because they were all very kindly, mothering people. I probably needed a bit of that, to help me through some of those films. On the male side, no one really jumps out at me. There are some people who are definitely difficult. Anthony Steel was difficult, and George Sanders was really quite reclusive, quite difficult to contact. Oh! Someone else—another woman, actually—I really loved working with was Mona Washborne. She's the typical chubby nanny, and that's exactly what she played in **COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS**. I played with Maurice Chevalier in that film, and he was fun.

**SS:** Have you kept up with any of the people with whom you worked?

**MS:** Not really—with the exception of Deborah Kerr, whom I did see a few years ago in England. She was working in a play in Bath and I phoned her. She arranged some tickets and we went to see her. I would say, as a trait, once something is past with me, it's past. I tend not to look back very much.

**SS:** When did you develop an interest in architecture?

**MS:** Funnily enough, I actually have a recording of an interview with CVC television in Canada, where, at the age of 12, I was asked what future I saw for myself. And I said in my very precocious little educated

voice, "Well, I think I'd like to be an engineer or an architect." (Laughs) I already liked building. When my dad was alive and working on our house, I quite enjoyed painting and helping him. So yes, at the age of 12, I'd formulated the idea to be an engineer or an architect. James Mason, of course, did it the other way around. He became an architect, and then became an actor.

**SS:** Did he?

**MS:** Oh, yes. I greatly liked him. I should add him to the list, because I did act with James Mason, and I did enjoy working with him. He was a very nice man.

**SS:** What was the film?

**MS:** **A TOUCH OF LARCENY**. It was quite a nice little film.

**SS:** Have you a favorite picture?

**MS:** Well, for sheer quality, the two favorites have got to be **VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED** and **THE INNOCENTS** on top, just because it was such a comprehensive part. The entire quality of the film was very high, I think. But certainly **VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED** is a close second.

**SS:** You sound very happy with the way your life has progressed.

**MS:** There are so many child actors who have found it very hard to adjust to not being in the business when they grow older and less successful. That's a fairly common theme amongst child actors. I feel fortunate that I kept enough education together to get through school, and get a training in a profession I like very much. I'm even more fortunate, actually, to have married my wife Deni, who already had an interest in meditation. It was she who first took a course and I saw her looking brighter and sharper and happier. I'm grateful that I've come in contact with this particular meditation, which really has been a very practical tool throughout the last 15 years of my life. I would encourage anyone to give this meditation a try.

**SS:** And would you also encourage child actors today to get more than the bare minimum in education?

**MS:** Oh, really. Personally I feel it's immoral of the stage schools that encourage children in the belief that they're all going to be little starlets. The chances of being highly successful as a child actor, let alone an adult one, are very small. I know that there have been—especially in the time that I was working—a lot of very unhappy, very disillusioned kids.



# Record Rack

by Ross Care

The Golden Age of the studio system was a unique, incredibly prolific period of creative history that spanned over three decades, from the 1930s to the late 1950s and the early 1960s. It was an era when Hollywood attracted a dizzyingly varied spectrum of creative artists, from artistic refugees from a war-torn Europe to native talent often nurtured in American theater. It was also a period when movies, even low-budget "B" pictures, were mostly well-written and beautifully, if effusively, scored. Remember good screenwriting and good film music?

Well, Marco Polo, a label devoted mostly to film scores and classical compositions by a broad variety of composers who have been involved in cinema, does. As most current films show, it's not easy simulating the best work of the past, and, in the case of film music reconstruction, it's extremely difficult. Many "hard copy" manuscripts of film scores were destroyed in studio purges of the not too distant past. (Rumor has it that most of MGM's scores and orchestral parts are now part of a landfill beneath an L. A. housing development!) Fortunately, some of these scores did survive, mostly in the collections of libraries and archives such as those at USC and UCLA on the west coast, and, on the east coast, at the Library of Congress where, very fortunately, a tremendous amount of music was sent for copyrighting during Hollywood's peak period.

Commencing in the early 1990s, Marco Polo launched a series of digitally rerecorded scores reconstructed by a staff of musicians devoted to the geniuses of the classic era. To me, the Golden Age may be divided into early, middle, and late periods, with film scoring reaching an apex of subtlety and invention during the

late period of the 1950s and early '60s. The guys at MP seem to favor the early/middle period, certainly a rich era as well, and last column we covered conductor Adriano's recording of most of Franz Waxman's score for Hitchcock's *REBECCA* (1940), an early (1991) entry in the Polo series. Well, MP has continued

"romance" than on "history," a tendency the scores recorded here verify. Adriano has also rerecorded Bernard Herrmann's score for 20th Century Fox's 1944 adaptation of the Charlotte Brontë classic, *JANE EYRE* (MP 8.223535). Herrmann reportedly replaced Igor Stravinsky as composer on *EYRE*, partially on the recommendation of Orson Welles (who plays Rochester in the film) and with whom Herrmann had worked on the Mercury Theater radio shows, as well as on both *CITIZEN KANE* (1941) and the savaged but still magnificent *THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS* (1942).

*EYRE* is one of Herrmann's most romantic and broodingly lyrical scores. It's also one of the most recorded. The original soundtrack was released as the companion score to David Raksin's *LAURA* (1946) on the original series of Fox Film Scores (07822-11006-2), and the composer rerecorded a 13-minute suite from the film on his series of London LPs from the '60s, recently reissued on CD (London 417-852-2). Like his *REBECCA*, Adriano's CD provides the most thorough version yet of the score: 21 cues clocking in at a total of 68.15. Parts of the score ended up in Herrmann's Brontë opera, *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*, as did bits of another bittersweet romantic classic, *THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR* (1947).

The two current Marco Polo CDs, *HISTORICAL ROMANCES* and *CAPTAIN BLOOD*, are anthologies devoted to the work of several giants of the film music field: Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Max Steiner, Alfred Newman, Miklos Rozsa, and Victor Young. Working from piano conductor's scores—miniversions of the total orchestration notated on from four to six staves and at pitch, i.e., not transposed (as in a full or-



the good work with a series of reconstructions, some devoted (like *REBECCA*) to one score, and some to particular genres, such as the Hans Salter Music for *Frankenstein* CD (MP 8.223477) from 1992, and two recent releases keyed to Hollywood's version of history: *HISTORICAL ROMANCES* (MP 8.223608) and *CAPTAIN BLOOD* (MP 8.223607).

Needless to say, Hollywood usually placed more emphasis on

chestral score)—and sometimes only from a single remaining orchestral part, a team of experienced Hollywood musicians (conductor Richard Kaufman, and three reconstructionists John Morgan, William Stromberg, and the late Christopher Palmer) have pumped new life into a series of rousing and often beautiful scores.

Film music of the late 1930s and '40s was rarely subtle, but, with rare exceptions, it was not supposed to be. My favorite entries from both discs remain those by Korngold, notably his JUAREZ "overture" composed for the 1939 premiere of the Bette Davis/Paul Muni film. The piece opens with a fanfare anticipating his celebrated opening to KINGS ROW (1942), but which for most listeners of a certain age will more readily evoke a certain George Lucas space opera. JUAREZ quickly segues to a typically lush Korngold love theme, also colorfully integrating bits of authentic Hispanic folk music along the way. On the same disc, his themes for DEVOTION (1946) again emphasize romance, this time for a Hollywood version of the story of the Brontë sisters (portrayed by Olivia de Havilland and Ida Lupino), whose actual romantic lives could probably be more accurately described as hysterical than historical.

The remainder of the disc goes to two other giants of the era, Alfred Newman and Max Steiner. GUNGA DIN (1939) was one of Newman's biggest scores of the '30s before he moved to 20th Century Fox, where he remained as one of Hollywood's most respected and influential musical director/composers until well into the CinemaScope era of the '50s and beyond. GUNGA DIN is a real rouser, but don't expect the heart-wrenching poignancy of ensuing Newman classics such as THE ROBE (1953) and his exquisite and little-known THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (1959). And sorry, I just can't watch GUNGA DIN anymore without thinking of Blake Edwards' marvelous parody at the opening of THE PARTY (1968).

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE (1936) is classic Max Steiner and all that that entails. Though I love some of his melodies (such as his exquisite theme for 1955's rare HELEN OF TROY, nicely recorded at the time of the film's release as a Les Baxter 45 rpm single) Steiner has never been one of my fave raves. In a recent article, Royal S. Brown called GONE WITH THE WIND

(1939) one of the most overrated scores in history, and I tend to agree. But if you're into it, both John Morgan's reconstruction and Kaufman's performance do the score full justice.

On the CAPTAIN BLOOD disc, we get more Korngold, a 20-minute suite from the title film, and more Steiner, a suite from the 1935 THE THREE MUSKETEERS, not the later MGM version which Herbert Stothart scored with a little help from Tchaikovsky. Speaking of which, the remainder of the disc is devoted to that studio of studios, albeit in its decadence of the mid-1950s. Two relative rarities are SCARAMOUCHE (1952) and THE KING'S THIEF (1955), the latter Miklos Rozsa's score for an obscure Edmund Purdom opus. (The handsome and beautifully articulate Purdom was launched into his 15



THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (1942) is among the scores recorded by Marco Polo.

minutes of stardom when he replaced a too tubby Mario Lanza in MGM's surprisingly moving 1954 remake of THE STUDENT PRINCE.)

Rozsa, of course, prolifically defined the bigger-than-life MGM epic sound of the 1950s with pictures as varied as BEN-HUR and THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL (both 1959). Indeed, Rozsa seemed to have scored every other MGM movie of the 1950s, and THE KING'S THIEF, here reconstructed by Christopher Palmer, shows the maestro as the total pro he consistently was, even for second-string historical potboilers such as this. Certainly there are a wealth of other '50s Rozsa rarities waiting in the wings: VALLEY OF THE KINGS (1954), GREEN FIRE (1954, and

which even produced an exotic pop title tune), and MOONFLEET (1955), among many others.

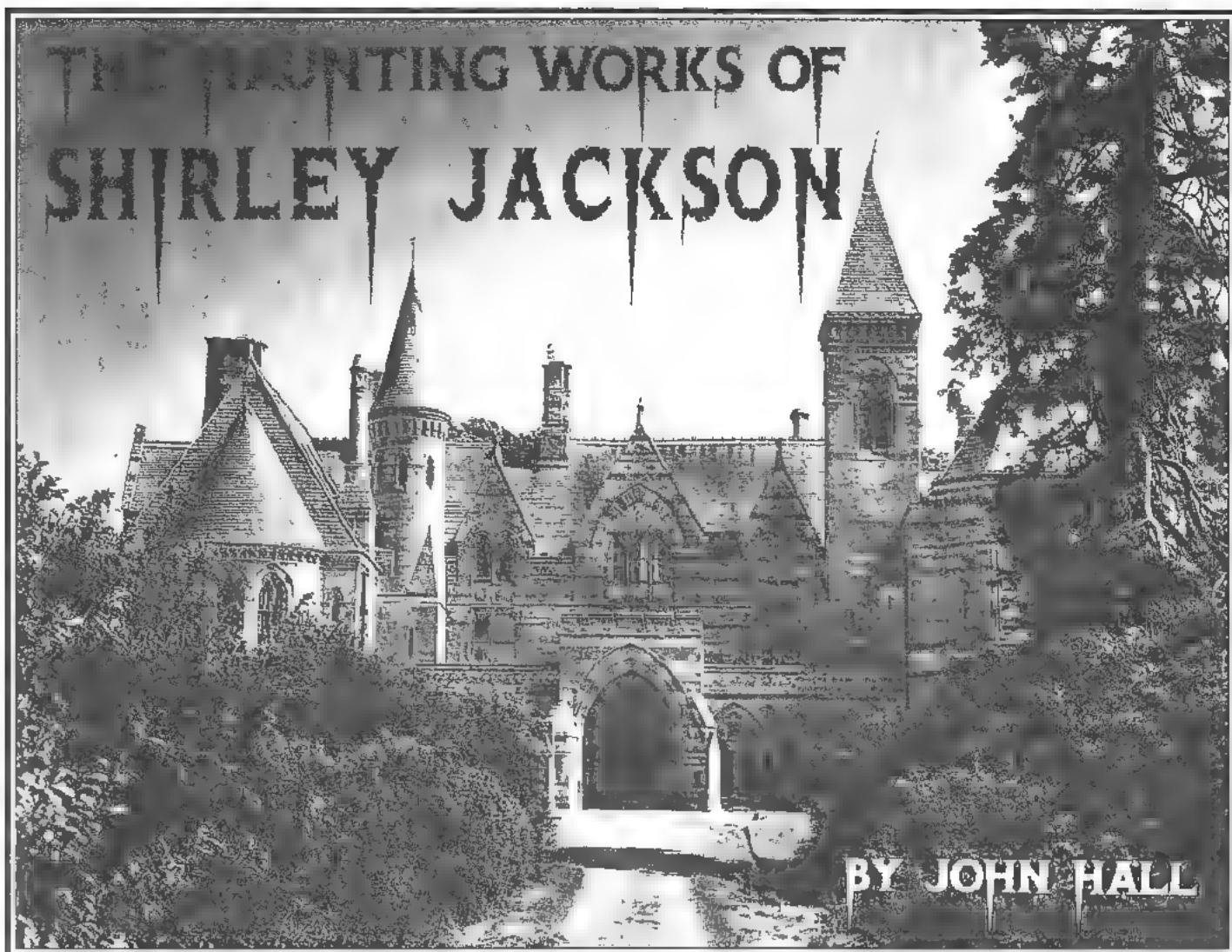
The other rarity is a suite from Victor Young's only MGM score, for George Sidney's lush, gorgeously photographed, and highly entertaining SCARAMOUCHE, a rousing version of the Sabatini novel, which starred Stewart Granger, Eleanor Parker, and Janet Leigh. Like Sidney's aforementioned 1948 THREE MUSKETEERS (which starred Gene Kelly), SCARAMOUCHE is essentially a musical without songs, the elaborately choreographed duels and brawls filling in for production numbers. Young is a Hollywood giant whose talent as an orchestral film composer has been eclipsed by the staggering number of hit standards he penned (mostly for Paramount), among them "Love Letters," "My Foolish Heart," "When I Fall in Love," and "Stella by Starlight," the last adapted from his atmospheric score for THE UNINVITED (1944). Thus, Young's underscoring work has been somewhat neglected on CD. However, his orchestral prowess is aptly exemplified by such scores as the haunting FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS (1943), the epic SAMSON AND DELILAH (1949), and SCARAMOUCHE, a prototype action/romance score in which his orchestral rhythms and colors aptly reflect the glittering pace and hyper-refined Technicolor cinematography of Sidney's engaging adventure charade.

Marco Polo's series of reconstructed scores, well performed and recorded, carry on the spirit of the great work of Charles Gerhardt and his pioneering and still essential anthologies of classic film music on RCA. The recent MP albums even manage to dress up the art direction which is a bit off-puttingly dowdy on such early releases as REBECCA and the FRANKENSTEIN disc. I certainly wish them continuing success with an interesting series. The CAPTAIN BLOOD also (at least partially) stands as a memorial to the talent and devotion to film music of Christopher Palmer, who died of AIDS in January 1995, a tragic loss to both film music reconstruction and literature.



Ross Care is a composer and author who is currently struggling to say everything about his favorite era of films and film music, the 1950s, in one article.





*"It isn't fair, it isn't right," Mrs. Hutchinson screamed, and then they were upon her.*

**W**ith those 15 words, Shirley Jackson sealed her fate. When *The New Yorker* published her short story, "The Lottery," on June 28, 1948, it changed her life forever. In the weeks that followed, her name leaped from obscurity to infamy, all because of a nine-page story, a story that led to cancelled subscriptions and sacks of hate mail—from the readers of one of America's most literate magazines!

During her short life, this complex woman produced numerous short stories, six novels, and two collections of blissfully hectic home life (*Life Among the Savages* and *Raising Demons*). Since most of Shirley Jackson's works focused on instability, mental disintegration, and the supernatural, it comes as no surprise that these inspired one of the best "horror" movies ever crafted. Unfortunately, they have also spawned some of the worst adaptations this side of Stephen King's fiction.

Jackson was born on December 14, 1916, in San Francisco, to a vain, insensitive social climber of a woman, Geraldine Bugbee Jackson. More than anything, Geraldine wanted an unintelligent but attractive daughter she could show off at social gatherings. With her plain looks, large frame, and keenly intelligent

mind, Shirley Jackson was an embarrassment to her parents from day one.

Growing up in a suburb of San Francisco, Jackson trained herself to write 1,000 words a day (a habit that later allowed her to produce so many works while a harried housewife). After dropping out of New York's University of Rochester, Jackson enrolled at Syracuse University, where she flourished in its comparatively free atmosphere. Her short story "Janice"—a college student's delighted recounting of her suicide attempt—hooked the attention and admiration of fellow student Stanley Edgar Hyman, prompting the future literary critic to declare to his roommate, "I am going to marry that girl!"

Shirley and Stanley hit it off from the start. Together they founded and edited Syracuse's literary magazine, the *Spectre*, Jackson writing many antiprejudice editorials. (She mortified her Protestant parents with the news that she was dating a Jew.) They married a year after graduation. Jackson, not wanting the world to know her husband was three years younger than her, altered her documents so that she and Stanley were the same age. First living in New York City, they later moved to Bennington, Vermont, where Stanley taught at prestigious Bennington College and Shirley cared for their four children (Laurence, Joanne, Sally, and Barry) and wrote in her spare time.



LEFT: Shirley Jackson was hardly the "perfect child" her parents expected. Here, mother (Geraldine Bugbee Jackson) and daughter go biking in a rare show of togetherness (circa 1935). RIGHT: Shirley Jackson poses with her brother Barry in 1936.



Of all Shirley Jackson's works, "The Lottery" remains her most famous—or infamous. It has been adapted numerous times for stage, television, and (allegedly) a ballet! Its many versions all stay true to the basic story line, with the occasional creative difference. For example, Old Man Warner, the village elder, varies in age from 77 to 81, depending on the adaptation. Also, the number of Bill and Tessie Hutchinson's children fluctuates (though little Davy is always present).

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Ellen Violett's adaptation of "The Lottery" aired on NBC's CAMEO THEATRE on June 14, 1950, and was later collected in William I. Kaufman's *Great Television Plays*. In this version, the villagers have voted that everyone must register for the lottery the day before it occurs. Asked why he voted for a measure he doesn't condone, Old Man Warner replies, "Looked around me at what the rest of the boys were doin'. Went with the majority. Majority always right,"—a sentiment that sets the screenplay's tone.

Many of the village's younger inhabitants have serious reservations about the lottery, but inertia and tradition prevent them from speaking out. Then a Stranger shows up, asking for directions. He reveals that he's from the North village, which has abolished the lottery. This revelation shocks the villagers: who abolished it, they ask? "One man started it," replies the Stranger. "And then it grew. It seemed all we needed was one man to say he thought it was wrong, and stand up against it." Bill and Tessie have expressed their doubts, but neither wants to be the first to oppose custom. Asked if he'll sow dissension, the Stranger says, "It wouldn't do any good. It has to be one of your own people. You have to do it yourself." He then leaves.

From there, THE LOTTERY pretty much follows its short-story roots, with Tessie the "lucky winner." However, the half-hour adaptation concludes with a rather unnecessary moral from the Stranger:

People do it in other places, too, out of superstition or fear or hate, used to call it persecution. Now, they call it prejudice, but it all means the same thing. A lottery. Lots of people gang up on

one person or maybe a tribe, and it always ends up the same way . . . Like I say, they stopped it in my town. How about yours?

Brainerd Duffield reworked "The Lottery" for the stage as a one-act play in 1952; it has been collected in *15 American One-Act Plays*, edited by Paul Kozelka. In this version, Bill and Tessie's last name is Hutchison, not Hutchinson. Perhaps most strangely, Joe Summers (the lottery's ringmaster) now has a sister, Belva, who dresses in black, knits constantly, and stands apart from the other villagers, whom she despises. Belva vocally opposes the lottery because she and Joe had another brother who was driven out of the village for protesting the custom. Joe calls his brother a coward, but Belva retorts, "It takes real courage to fight prejudice on your own doorstep . . . It's you and the rest of 'em that are the cowards." (Why doesn't Belva leave? Because she knows that one day Joe's name will be drawn, and she doesn't want to miss that!)

Perhaps most chilling, in this version of the story, Tessie's husband, Bill, casts the first stone and actually eggs the villagers on! Then Davy throws his, and the rest of the villagers join in . . .

In 1969, Larry Yust scripted, produced, and directed THE LOTTERY for Encyclopedia Britannica's SHORT STORY SHOWCASE with admirable results. After the disclaimer that "the following is fiction," Yust's 18-minute adaptation quickly sets the village pace: boys gather rocks and horse around; girls clump and gossip, as do the women; and the men discuss taxes and home improvement. Two gentlemen, Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves, carry the black box from which the villagers draw their lots. Of course, Tessie Hutchinson ends up with the "winning" ticket and is stoned to death.

Though filmed in 1969, this LOTTERY maintains its timelessness by dressing its characters in clothes and hairstyles of the late '50s/early '60s. Also, most of the villagers are played by actual inhabitants of the towns of Fellows and Taft, California! Their presence lends the film a small-town authenticity that all of Hollywood's character actors couldn't provide. Yust's camerawork cuts and pans quickly, giving the production the quality

of a grotesque home video. He expertly builds tension with extreme closeups on the villagers' anxious faces and the folded pieces of paper they clutch. Yust handles the stoning in a similar manner, relying on closeups of Tessie Hutchinson's bloody, terrified face, camera shots from her point of view, and a sudden pulling away when the villagers converge upon her.

On the acting front, Olive Dunbar (Mrs. Pfeiffer on *MY THREE SONS*) captures Tessie's helpless horror quite well, while Messrs. Summers and Graves resemble a malevolent Bartles and Jaymes! Also, keep an eye out for a very young Ed Begley Jr.—the Emmy-winning *ST. ELSEWHERE* actor—as a teenage villager. *THE LOTTERY* falls short only on two very minor points: the lottery box isn't nearly as battered as depicted in the story, and little Davy Hutchinson is blonde, even though his parents and older siblings all sport dark brown hair!

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Jackson's first novel, *The Road Through the Wall* (1948), saw print shortly before the "Lottery" controversy; it explores the effect that a young girl's murder has on the 12 families of a small California community. Unfortunately, its overly-large cast prevents the novel from truly succeeding. Her next effort, *Hangsamen* (1951), proved far more successful.

Natalie Waite, a young college student, doesn't fit in with her peers. Mentally unstable to begin with, she goes over the edge when she is apparently raped, and creates a (seemingly) imaginary friend, Tony. In a climax set within the woods, Natalie must choose between continued mental disintegration (Tony) or sanity (herself).

Mental deterioration was the main focus of Jackson's next novel, *The Bird's Nest* (1954). Blaming herself for her mother's death, mousy Elizabeth Richmond develops four distinct personalities: Lizzie, Beth, Betsy, and Bess. Only with the help of pompous psychiatrist Dr. Victor Wright and eccentric Aunt Morgen does Elizabeth

reintegrate her mind—and is then promptly christened Victoria Morgen by her "saviors."

Critics received *The Bird's Nest* with nearly unanimous praise; in 1955, a deal was struck to turn the novel into a movie, which was ultimately directed by Hugo Haas. Unfortunately, *LIZZIE* wasn't released until 1957, the same year as the far superior *THE THREE FACES OF EVE*. Eleanor Parker gives a good performance as Elizabeth and her other personalities, but it pales in comparison to Joanne Woodward's Oscar-winning turn as Eve. Richard Boone played Dr. Wright, and Joan Blondell provided some comedy as Aunt Morgen.

Shirley Jackson professed to being too overwhelmed initially to judge *LIZZIE*; her husband had no such reservations, though, and "pronounced it horrible," according to Judy Oppenheimer's *Private Demons: The Life of Shirley Jackson* (G. Putnam's Sons, 1988). Oppenheimer reveals Shirley's eventual reaction:

In retrospect, she came to share Stanley's view on the movie. "They made her into a lunatic, which she can't be, by definition, and the doctor cures her with a very interesting combination of Freudian analysis, pre-Freudian hypnosis, Jungian word association, and Rorschach [sic] inkblots. Not one of these systems gets along with any of the others in real life..." she wrote tartly.

Jackson's next supernatural effort, *The Sundial*, came out in 1958 to mixed reviews. According to Oppenheimer, Jackson fought with her Bennington neighbors over her daughter Sally's treatment by an elderly schoolteacher. The villagers didn't take kindly to criticism by an "outsider," which only increased Jackson's contempt for them. This contempt manifested itself in *The Sundial*'s caustic humor, which is generated at its characters' expenses. Members of the wealthy Halloran family come to believe that the world will end, but they will survive

**LEFT:** The Hyman family at Christmastime in 1953. On the couch: Stanley, Bunny, Scott, Laurence, Shirley, Arthur. On the floor: Joanne, Barry, Sally, and Toby (the dog). **RIGHT:** Shirley Jackson at work in her husband Stanley's study. The photo was taken in 1947.







LEFT and RIGHT: Eleanor Vance (Julie Harris) has eyes only for handsome Dr. John Markway (Richard Johnson), head of the team investigating *THE HAUNTING* (1963), but winds up sharing a bed with Theodora (Claire Bloom), a sophisticated lesbian psychic. PAGE 68. The three faces of *LIZZIE* (1957).

Armageddon (provided they stay in their sumptuous mansion during the destruction) and emerge as leaders of the new world. As with *The Road Through the Wall*, the novel is hampered by its large cast—a dozen main characters and many minor ones—and a conclusion that leaves the reader (and the novel's characters) hanging. Does the world end? We never find out.

Nineteen fifty-nine saw the printing of *The Haunting of Hill House*, one of Jackson's masterpieces. In fact, Stephen King writes in *Danse Macabre* (Everest House, 1981) that "it seems to me that it [*Hill House*] and James's *The Turn of the Screw* are the only two great novels of the supernatural in the last hundred years . . ." Dr. John Montague, an anthropologist with a yen for the supernatural, assembles a team of "ghost hunters" to determine whether 80-year-old Hill House—which has seen tragedy since its construction—is truly haunted. His companions are Luke Sanderson, Hill House's future owner; Theodora, a chic New Yorker; and Eleanor Vance, a repressed spinster in her 30s, who spent most of her life caring for her recently-deceased, invalid mother.

Ambiguity reigns supreme in this novel: with its uneven floors and stairs, self-shutting doors, a floor plan based on concentric circles, and rooms crammed with uncomfortable furniture, Hill House seems designed to deceive and confuse. How can the explorers discover the truth when they can't even trust their own senses? The truth finally comes at a terrible price: Eleanor's life. The psychically-sensitive spinster bonds with Hill House in the belief that it is the only place she has felt wanted and needed. She kills herself rather than be sent away.

In 1963, the novel was masterfully adapted for the screen as *THE HAUNTING*; naturally, the movie bares some distinct changes from its source. Eleanor's last name becomes Vance; Luke's last name becomes Sanderson; and Dr. Montague turns into Dr. John Markway. His ghost-chasing wife metamorphoses into skeptical Grace Markway, and her blustering companion, Arthur Parker, is completely written out of the movie. Here, Theo is a lesbian with her eye on Eleanor; the book barely hints at such a possibility. Events leading to *THE HAUNTING*'s climax differ as well: Grace Markway disappears, apparently spirited away by the forces of Hill House, which never happens in the novel. The movie

ends with Eleanor quoting the final paragraph of *The Haunting of Hill House*, with one major change: "and we who walk here, walk alone."

Scenarist Nelson Gidding and director Robert Wise are at their best with *THE HAUNTING*, especially in the decision to leave the forces of Hill House to one's imagination. (Given form, the movie's spirits wouldn't have nearly as much impact.) Eleanor and Theo cower together as something pounds on the door, tests the door-knob, scratches at it, then pounds again. An unearthly light blazes through the space between door and floor. The camera assumes an odd angle as it tracks the pounder's progress; this off-balance shot enhances the scene's chilling unreality. Later, another door evokes terror as it bulges inward. It doesn't splinter or come off its hinges—it bulges. Obscenely.

*THE HAUNTING* is a *tour de force* for its actors as well. Julie Harris perfectly captures mousy, neurotic Eleanor and makes her wholly sympathetic. As Theodora, Claire Bloom exudes a cool sensuality. Russ Tamblyn's Luke is the quintessential brash young man, initially doubting the supernatural until his own experiences show him otherwise. Richard Johnson, in a role originally intended for Peter Ustinov, gives a nicely understated performance (rational and scientific, yet compassionate and caring) as Dr. Markway. Special accolades go to Valentine Dyall and Rosale Crutchley as the sinister Mr. and Mrs. Dudley, Hill House's caretakers. Dyall is insolent and menacing in the best tradition of Shirley Jackson's small minded villagers; Crutchley's pinched face breaks into a smile only after unsettling the guests with foreboding remarks.

A spoof of *THE HAUNTING* appears in *WAXWORKS 2: LOST IN TIME* (1990). Zach Galligan's character suddenly finds himself in an ominous house with a bimbo Eleanor, a lustful Theo (*STAR TREK*'s Marina Sirtis hamming it up), and a nerdy professor (*THE EVIL DEAD*'s Bruce Campbell). Filmed in black and white, this is easily the most entertaining segment in an otherwise ridiculous sequel.

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Illness—partly physical, mainly mental—delayed Shirley Jackson's final novel, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, until 1962. Jackson combined her own agorapho-

Herbert L. O'Malley Peter Lorre Boris Karloff Lionel Atwill Bela Lugosi Vincent Price!

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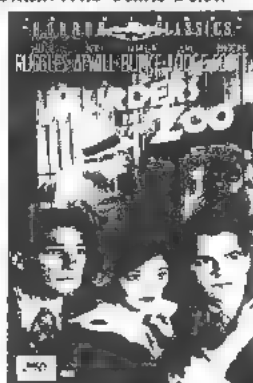


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bia with a sympathetic, yet psychopathic, narrator to produce yet another unsettling classic. In this book, readers see through the eyes of Mary Katherine "Merricat" Blackwood, one of three survivors of the night her family ate sugar spiced with arsenic. Merricat's older sister, Constance, was tried and acquitted of the murders. Now they live in the family mansion, tending to feeble Uncle Julian. All is well in this bizarre household until Cousin Charles' visit upsets the delicate equilibrium. He thinks Constance should commit both Uncle Julian and Merricat and be freer with the family fortunes, stored in an upstairs safe.

Jackson's mental state improved after the release of *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, but her physical state did not. A chain-smoker, heavy drinker, and eater of cholesterol-rich foods, she weighed close to 300 pounds. Her constant use of codeine and amphetamines (prescribed when doctors didn't know their harmful side effects) didn't help, either. Jackson began working on another novel, *Come Along With Me*, but completed only 25 pages before dying in her sleep of a heart attack on August 8, 1965 (five days short of her 25th wedding anniversary) at age 48. As Jack Sullivan so eloquently put it in *Supernatural Fiction Writers* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), "her life ended like her fiction—by stopping abruptly, without climax or denouement."

Jackson's posthumous legacy includes two collections of her works, *The Magic of Shirley Jackson* (1966) and *Come Along With Me* (1968), edited by her husband, Stanley Edgar Hyman. Her legacy also indirectly includes a stage adaptation of *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, which most playgoers were content to quickly forget.

Hugh Wheeler captured the novel's basics in his play *WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN THE CASTLE* (1966), but little else. For example, the book's Merricat is always accompanied by her black cat, Jonas; this enhances her witch-like image. For dramatic purposes—and because an onstage cat would be impossible to control—Wheeler turned Jonas into a "little colored boy who has been adopted by Constance from an orphanage," according to Walter Kerr's *New York Times* review! The play didn't explain how a young woman acquitted of multiple murders was able to adopt Jonas, and his tag-along presence certainly detracts from Merricat's credibility.

On the acting front, only Alan Webb received good reviews as Uncle Julian. Kerr describes Shirley Knight's Constance as "rather monotonously unstrung" and is less than complimentary of Phillip Clark's rendition of

Charles. Heather Menzies apparently failed as Merricat as well, but blame lies partially with author Wheeler; Shirley Jackson intended Merricat to be an ambiguous, Lizzie Borden type of character. The stage version of Merricat lacked any such subtlety.

Garson Kanin's staging apparently left much to be desired, also; Wilfrid Sheed points out in his *Commonweal* review that "[Merricat] is supposed to be in communion with the dead, but this requires a relative intensity of atmosphere; and since this is not laid on, Miss Menzies is left holding the bag: incanting into a dead phone." Sheed concludes with the devastatingly offhand comment that "to be fair, it might

be added that Shirley Jackson's ... special note of offhand malignancy would probably be hard to translate to the stage, even if you were trying." Not surprisingly, *WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN THE CASTLE* closed after only three days at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre.

A more ambitious, albeit uneven, television adaptation of Jackson's *Come Along With Me* came in 1981 from Rubicon Productions. Directed by Joanne Woodward, the script by June Finfer, Morton Neal Miller, and Woodward pads Jackson's 25-page fragment into an hour-long dramedy focusing on unconventional Mabel Lederer (Estelle Parsons). Following the death of her artist husband Hughie—"my only mistake"—Mabel quickly sells off her house and belongings, burns Hughie's paintings, and leaves town with no particular destination in mind. Liberated from her stifling husband and neighbors, she adopts the name Angela Motorman, tries her hand (unsuccessfully) at shoplifting, and lodges at the boarding house of the dour, skeletal Mrs. Faun (Barbara Baxley), who has a handicapped 12-year-old son, Tom (Martin Kein). Angela's long-dormant psychic powers have also begun to reawaken; "It's really a hobby of mine, mostly. But if it does people some good, why keep it

to myself?" She convinces Mrs. Faun (who admonishes that "anything you raise by way of spirits, you have to put back yourself") and her mostly unsympathetic fellow lodgers to participate in a seance, which only conjures up a whining Hughie! The following morning, "Angela Barber" leaves for the train station, eager to adopt a new home.

Presumably because it was intended as an educational piece, *COME ALONG WITH ME* proceeds at a glacial pace, but successfully captures the loopy flavor of Jackson's novel fragment—for the most part. Some



*Continued on page 108*

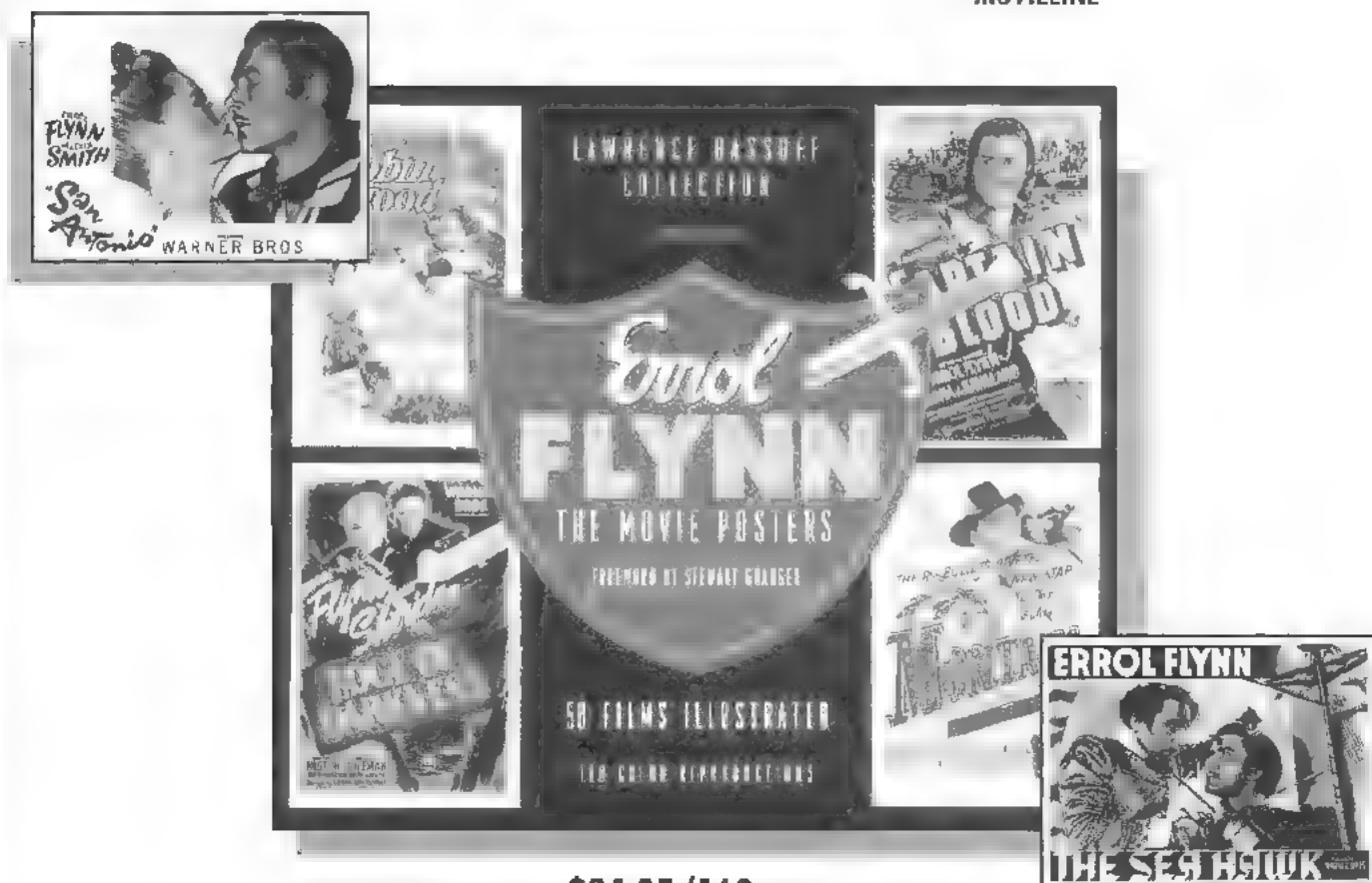


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# WOMB TO TOMB RUSS TAMBLYN

"Womb to tomb," says Riff to his pal Tony in *WEST SIDE STORY* (1961). "Birth to earth," replies Tony, little knowing that death looms ever closer for the two teen gang members.

Actor Russ Tamblyn, who played Riff in that Robert Wise musical classic, may not have made his film debut direct from the womb, but he started early, with appearances in *THE BOY WITH GREEN HAIR* (1948) and *SAMSON AND DELILAH* (1949). And though he's certainly far from ready for the tomb, he came pretty close in another Robert Wise classic: *THE HAUNTING* (1963).

As for a mid-life crisis, can anything be scarier than being cornered by *Scarlet Street* for an exclusive interview? Read on.

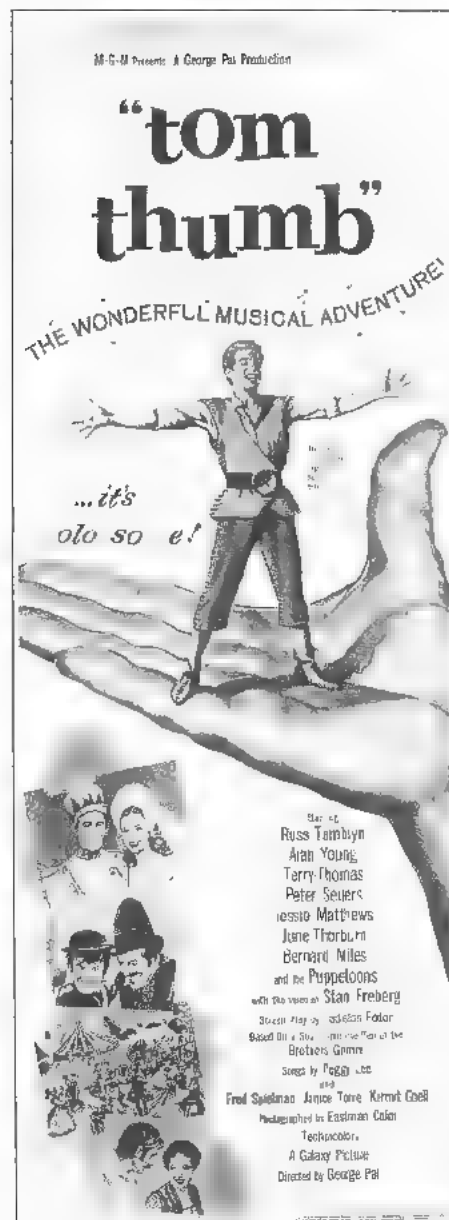
INTERVIEW BY  
JOHN BRUNAS

**Russ Tamblyn:** I was a child actor; I wasn't really a child star. I started when I was 10 and took tap lessons. I had a dramatic coach named Grace Bowman; we used to do little skits and things. It was Grace Bowman who told my parents, "Oh, you ought to have him join the Screen Children's Guild"—which was a big racket at the time. If there's one thing that there's a lot of, it's parents who think their kids are stars. (Laughs) Oddly enough, the Guild sent me out for a part in a play called *THE STONE JUNGLE*, and that was the first professional thing I did. Lloyd Bridges was the actor/director and we did it for three days, trying to raise money so we could do it longer. During those three days, Joseph Losey, who directed *THE BOY WITH GREEN HAIR*, saw it and I went over to see about being in that film. A talent scout from Paramount came over to see it, too, and I got an audition with Cecil B. DeMille for *SAMSON AND DELILAH*. I did the scene with an actor by the name of Richard Webb, who eventually did *CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT*. He played Samson in the test. As soon as we did the scene, the doors opened and in came Cecil B. DeMille and four or five other people. He said, "Well, my boy, you got the part." And so I did my first movie, which was *THE BOY WITH GREEN HAIR*, and after that I did *SAMSON AND DELILAH*. I was 12 and I used to take a streetcar, because not only was I working on the film, but I went to school there, too. I'll tell you an amusing story: when I'd get off the streetcar, there was this long wall and behind it was a cemetery, and then at the end of the cemetery was Paramount. I used to climb up on the wall of the cemetery and then, when I got to the corner of the lot at Paramount, I used to drop down. Well, this one time I got to the wall at Paramount and, when I looked down, I saw they were shooting a scene—so I had a sort of crawl along the wall. I sneaked along until I found a place where there was just one guy sitting in a chair, and I dropped down and scared the hell out of him! (Laughs) And it was Alan Ladd! He said, "God! Don't ever do that again, son! You just scared the hell out of me!" And that was my introduction to Alan Ladd.

**Scarlet Street:** Whom else did you meet when you first started at Paramount?

**RT:** I remember Elizabeth Scott was working on a movie at that time, and I visited her. I still have autographed pictures. She wrote, "To my favorite

beau." She really liked me. She thought I was really cute; I had all this curly hair. (Laughs) And somebody said, "Oh, you oughta go over to Stage 15. There's two guys over there, they'll just crack you up." So I went over there and it was Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. They were making *MY FRIEND IRMA*. Jerry



Lewis had everybody in hysterics. He'd light up a cigarette and not know where to put the ashes, so he'd unzip Dean Martin's fly! But, as you know, they didn't last. Maybe a hot ash went down and . . . (Laughs)

**SS:** *GUN CRAZY* was one of your early film appearances.

**RT:** I went and saw Joseph Lewis. He had a daughter named Sandy. We used to pal around together—not as boyfriend and girlfriend, just as

friends. He had a house in Beverly Hills, right next door to Judy Garland's. Anyway, when I met him I did that movie. I played John Dall as a boy—basically a kid who loved guns. The movie started off in the rain. That was my introduction to fake rain. I look in a window at this gun, and I finally throw a brick through it. Then I had a scene in juvenile court. One of my friends says "I know he would never hurt anybody or do anything. He just loves guns!" So the judge says, "Well, give him 10 years anyway." A real sympathetic judge! (Laughs) "Go to prison and come out as John Dall." And then I ended up working with Alan Ladd, too. I did a movie called *CAPTAIN CAREY, U.S.A.*

**SS:** Had Ladd grown by that time?

**RT:** He looked bigger, but then I noticed he was walking on boxes. (Laughs) He was perfectly built, so when they put him on the screen, he looked big. He also worked with very short women most of the time. Then he worked with Sophia Loren and I guess he walked around on boxes all the time!

**SS:** Speaking of big women, you worked with Mamie Van Doren.

**RT:** Yes! Now, there was a big woman! (Laughs)

**SS:** And you also worked with horror star Lon Chaney Jr. in *DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN*.

**RT:** I didn't talk to him at all outside of the scene. I think the scene was underneath a pier and he was an axe murderer. I never saw any of those. (Laughs) I'd been around a long time; I came in and just wanted to get it done. I remember getting impatient, because Chaney was drunk. They had to hold him up and get him through the scene. God, it was so sad. He had done some of my favorite movies when I was a kid—*THE WOLF MAN* and all that.

**SS:** Which of your directors have you enjoyed working with the most?

**RT:** Probably David Lynch. He's a real actor's director and very patient. Cecil B. DeMille was fascinating. He had two guys with him all the time. One held a microphone and, whenever DeMille would start to speak, this guy would hold the mike in front of his mouth so DeMille didn't have to hold it. And the other guy walked behind him with a chair.

**SS:** You're kidding! (Laughs)

**RT:** It's true! DeMille just walked around and finally he'd sit down. And the chair was always there! I often thought, "What if this guy's looking the other way?" (Laughs)





LEFT: Russ Tamblyn and Diane Varsey as teenage residents of PEYTON PLACE (1957). RIGHT: Tamblyn played Jet-leader Riff in WEST SIDE STORY (1961). NEXT PAGE: The lyric for this song from SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS (1954) goes, "Can't get no sleep when you sleep with sheep." Some critters are so demanding!

But it never happened. The chair was always there. I didn't particularly like working with DeMille. DeMille did something that affected me very much when I was a kid. We were doing a scene in the temple. I had to run up to Samson and say, "Samson! It's me, Saul. I've got my slingshot on my head!" I had my slingshot wrapped around my head; I had a leather thing. Samson says, "No, Saul, you go ahead and get as far away from here as you can." So we shot it; I ran in and grabbed him and said my lines. DeMille came over and said, "Rusty, use your other hand, 'cause the camera's over here and this hand is blocking the take." I said, "Okay." So I ran in and grabbed him and I forgot to change hands. DeMille said, "Cut! Cut!" And he came over, and this guy had the microphone in front of his face, and he grabbed my arm and said, "Use this hand! Use it here! Not here! Here!" I was this 12-year-old kid and he yelled at me over this loudspeaker, where 2,000 extras could hear it all over the stage. I was so humiliated. I was fighting back tears; it was a terrible experience.

**SS:** You went from playing such brash young characters as Gideon in SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS to playing a repressed mama's boy in PEYTON PLACE. Was Norman the only character you were considered for in the film?

**RT:** No, as a matter of fact. I was under contract at MGM. They wanted to use me in PEYTON PLACE, which

was 20th Century Fox. I went over to meet Mark Robson and he said, "There are four or five parts you could play. We really want you in this movie." I guess I was hot at the time. He said, "Take your pick." So that part appealed to me more than any of the others, I guess because it was the opposite of what I had done. Actors always wanna play something different if they get the chance.

**SS:** It was a very melancholy part

**RT:** I went to the premiere. There was one scene where Diane Varsi was having a party and she said, "Would you like to dance?" I said, "No, I don't dance." And it got a big laugh. We had a lot of fun. Diane Varsi was pretty weird on that. She was pretty weird, anyway. Eventually she quit movies. I mean, she walked out of Hollywood. I have a picture of her with her suitcase! (Laughs) She was pretty far out. When we were rehearsing for PEYTON PLACE, she said, "I'd like to rehearse in the woods." So we knocked on Mark Robson's door and he said, "Okay, wait a minute; let me get a flashlight." We went into the woods in Maine, which maybe was a couple of blocks from the hotel, and we started rehearsing our scene with Mark holding the flashlight! (Laughs)

**SS:** It was a very notorious book. Was there any controversy surrounding the film when it opened?

**RT:** I don't remember any controversy over the film. Originally we

wanted to shoot it in where Grace Metalious was from, and they didn't want us, so we went to Portland.

**SS:** How did you get the title role in TOM THUMB?

**RT:** Well, I was making PEYTON PLACE, and I got a call from my agent. He said, "You're gonna do a movie for George Pal called TOM THUMB, which is one of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales." So, I went to a library in Maine and read "Tom Thumb!" I was so excited I couldn't see straight! It was very dramatic and dynamic! My first reaction when I read the script was extreme disappointment, because it had none of the depth or the power of the fairy tale. But it was my first trip to England, so that was like a big thrill.

**SS:** George Pal directed TOM THUMB.

**RT:** George directed it, but I worked mostly with Alex Romero, because Alex was the choreographer and we worked pretty close together. When you do musical numbers, you work out the number for the best angles—then you tell the director how you want it shot. It usually works out better if you let the choreographer be in charge.

**SS:** Those scenes with the poles—you look as though you're defying gravity.

**RT:** Yeah, that was fun. Did a lot of acrobatics in that one. I'll tell you a funny Peter Sellers story. Oddly enough, it wasn't on TOM THUMB. It was at the premiere of WEST SIDE STORY in England. It was the English premiere and just tons of peo-

ple were in line to meet the Queen. They told us, you don't ask her anything or say anything; you speak when you're spoken to, and when you answer you call her Your Royal Highness. So we met her and we sat in the royal box to see the movie. They happened to seat me directly behind Queen Elizabeth, and Peter Sellers was next to me. The lights started to go down and the curtain started to open for the prologue music of *WEST SIDE STORY*, and all of a sudden Peter Sellers leaned forward and said, "Lady, would you mind taking your crown off?"

SS: *He probably got away with it!*

RT: (Laughs) He did get away with it! And it's a true story, oh, and wonderful Peter Sellers!

SS: *Did she say anything?*

RT: She? She didn't budge! I mean, I watched her; I couldn't believe it! Here we'd gotten this big lecture, and Sellers makes this wisecrack—and she did not flinch. She did not flinch! I said, "Peter! How could you say that?" And he said, "Oh, it's okay. She'll laugh later back at the palace." (Laughs)

SS: *George Pal's movies were usually directed by other people.*

RT: Quite frankly, I didn't think he was a very good director. One of the things that he told me was, "Do that scene like Mickey Rooney would do it." That's not something you tell an actor, you know? You don't tell an actor to do the scene like some other actor would do it. Peter Sellers was in Italy when George asked him to do the movie and Peter turned it down

at first. Peter told me later that he didn't want to do it if George was gonna direct it. George was a really, really sweet guy, but he would get a bit corny.

SS: *You also starred in THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM for Pal. That was in Cinerama.*

RT: It was a very difficult process, because there were three cameras. Every time after a scene, the first thing they had to do was check the cameras to make sure that the film was all right, that it was all in sync. And if one was off, that was it. They'd have to shoot it over. There was one scene where I roll down the hill in a barrel, and George was gonna have this stagecoach drive by. He said, "Russ, when the coach comes by, I'd like you to roll down the hill and then get up and fall on the coach—backwards. Can you do that?" And I said, "George, I'm really great. But I'm not that great. And I'm really nuts! But I'm not that nuts!" (Laughs)

SS: *Tell us the story about the bridge.*

RT: Oh, yeah! There was a bridge in *THE BROTHERS GRIMM*. When I fall off and the coach goes across a bridge, then I walk across and fall through the bridge and catch myself. George wanted to put a belt on me, a safety belt with a rope. He also wanted to build a platform underneath the bridge, which was like a hundred feet high. I finally talked him out of it. I said, "Listen, I can do this." It was very simple; it's one of those tricks that looks a lot more difficult than it is. Well, they were ready

to shoot and George's secretary, Gail, came over. George said, "Oh, Gail! Come sit down and watch this scene with Russ! He's just gonna walk across the bridge. Nothing very exciting." So I walked across the bridge, sorta dizzy, and I hit the balsa wood and crashed through it. Well, Gail literally jumped up and screamed, and almost passed out! (Laughs)

SS: *Can you tell us what it was like filming THE HAUNTING?*

RT: Oh, it was extremely interesting. I don't remember anybody being really scared. As I remember, none of us believed in ghosts. But we knew that this house was haunted. Robert Wise had gone to the haunted house society in London and they had pictures of lots of haunted houses. He picked the most haunted house—but we didn't shoot inside it. We only shot the exterior of that house. The inside was a set. The inside of the actual house looked a lot different; it didn't have all those gargoyles and everything.

SS: *Did any of you come away from the film believing in ghosts?*

RT: There was one night when they were shooting outside and we stayed there. We not only shot there, but we had rooms. Now the house was an inn. It had a little bar with little tables—it was in northern England, outside of Stratford on Avon. So, we were staying there and it was very late. The arc lights were coming up

*Continued on page 113*



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LYLE TALBOT**

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**HIDEOUS SUN DEMON** (1959) Robert Clarke, Patricia Manning, Nan Peterson, Del Courtenay. After exposure to radiation, an atomic research scientist finds himself changing into a murderous, lizard-like monster every time he's exposed to the rays of the sun. Cheap, but lovable. Look for the "bat scene" which is missing from most prints. Our pre-print material is stunning.

**PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE** (1958) Bela Lugosi, Tor Johnson, Gregory Walcott, Tom Keene, Lyle Talbot, Joanna Lee, Dudley Manlove, Paul Marco. Director Ed Wood's legendary, classic "beddie." Not the worst movie ever made. (Try watching MESA OF LOST WOMEN or THE ATOMIC BRAIN sometime) but certainly one of the most lovable. Aliens use the bodies of the dead to become their murdering, zombie slaves.

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 62 (#DI-62)\*

**BLACK SABBATH** (1963) Boris Karloff, Mark Damon, Michelle Mercier, Jacqueline Poiroux. A Mario Bava masterpiece! Karloff hosts and stars in this superb trilogy of horror stories, all of which are unforgettable. "The Drop of Water" concerns a nurse who steals a ring off a dead spiritualist, only to have the corpse seek revenge. "The Telephone" features a prostitute who's terrorized by phone calls from a dead client. The final and best is "The Wurdak" featuring Karloff as a vampire who preys upon the blood of his loved ones. AIP scored big with this one.

**FIRST SPACESHIP ON VENUS** (1963) Gunther Simon, Kurt Racketman, Yoko Tani. An international expedition is launched to the planet Venus. There they find the planet and its former inhabitants completely destroyed by atomic war. Crew faces many perils including a blob-like monster. Some fine special effects (for its time) are featured in this enjoyable sci-fi thriller.



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## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 63 (#DI-63)\*



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GHOULS! SEE IF YOUR BOY FRIENDS CAN TAKE IT

THE VAMPIRE (1957) German Robles, Abel Salazar. The grand-daddy of Mexican vampire films. An evil Count threatens to put the bite on a beautiful young girl. Much inspired by the earlier Universal horror classics, with some nice atmosphere and good looking sets in spite of the film's low budget trappings.

**CURSE OF THE DOLL PEOPLE** (1960) Ramon Gay, Nora Veyan. A voodoo curse is put on a group of tourists who steal a Haitian devil doll. A lot of ghoulish little critters are roaming the countryside in what is one of the better K. Gordon Murray Mexican horrors. Recently remastered.



## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 64 (#DI-64)\*

**THE SINISTER URGE** (1960) Kenne Duncan, James Moore, Jean Fontaine, Carl Anthony, Dino Fantini, Conrad Brooks. Ed Wood's campy expose of the smut picture racket. Like all of Ed's previous films, it reeks of his usual warped, twisted, inept genius. Police try to track down a sex killer and put an end to the smut picture business that inspired his hideous crime. Ed, himself appears in a fight scene. From 35mm.

**THE VIOLENT YEARS** (1955) Jean Moorhead, Barbara Weeks, Timothy Farrell, I. Stanford Jolley. Ed Wood wrote this wildly entertaining screenplay about a gang of young girls that hold up gas stations and vandalize schools. The "rape" scene involving the gang girls and a young male captive is hilarious. Brought out of mothballs by Headliner Productions to fill the lower berth of a double bill with **SINISTER URGE**. From a stunning 35mm print.



## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 65 (#DI-65)\*

**WEREWOLF IN A GIRLS' DORMITORY** (1963) Barbara Jess, Carl Sched, Curt Lowers. A creepy gothic tale about a snarling werewolf on the prowl at a girls reform school. Suspicion falls upon a new teacher after a horrible, animal-like slaying takes place. Is he really the murdering beast? It played with **MAD EXECUTIONERS** only as a spot double feature, its regular companion film was **CORRIDORS OF BLOOD**. From a gorgeous 35mm print.

**THE MAD EXECUTIONERS** (1963) Wolfgang Preiss, Chris Howland, Maria Perschy. A mad scientist decapitates his victims and tries to keep their heads alive. Meanwhile, a group of strange vigilantes are capturing and murdering criminals without benefit of public trial. Is there a connection? Scotland Yard investigates. Released by Paramount. Partially letterboxed in the scope format.



## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 66 (#DI-66)\*



**THE SADIST** (1963) Arch Hall, Jr., Helen Hovey, Richard Alden, Marilyn Manning. The greatest low-budget, psycho-horror movie ever made, period, bar none. Three people driving into L.A. for a Dodgers game have car trouble and put into an old wrecking yard where they're held at bay by a bloodthirsty psycho and his crazy girlfriend. They put their captives through pure hell in this thriller that was easily 10 years ahead of its time. A classic you will never forget. From 35mm.

**PSYCHOMANIA** (1963 aka **VIOLENT MIDNIGHT**) Lee Phillips, James Fazerlino, Dick Van Patten. Axe murders galore are featured in this terrific little psycho-horror film about a mad killer loose in a small New England town. Who is the mad killer? An impressive cast that went on to great personal successes a few years later. From the man who gave you **HORROR OF PARTY BEACH**.

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 67 (#DI-67)

**LADY FRANKENSTEIN** (1972) Joseph Cotten, Sarah Bay, Nicky Hargillay. Baron Frankenstein's daughter creates a monster of her own to satisfy her bizarre sexual desires! Screaming naked ladies and remopping monsters are featured in this rousing color horror shocker shot in Europe. Beautiful color. Definitely rated "R."

**BEAST OF THE YELLOW NIGHT** (1971) John Ashley, Mary Wilcox. A wicked old disciple of the Devil is able to absorb evil from the souls of the people he murders. He eventually turns into a horrible monster and is hunted down by the local police. Roger Corman was executive producer for this unusual Philippine shocker. Color. From 35mm.

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 68 (#DI-68)\*



**TERROR IS A MAN** (1959) Francis Lederer, Richard Derr, Greta Thyssen. An excellent sci-fi/horror opus shot by an all English speaking cast in the Philippines. A mad scientist transforms a panther into a man-like creature that escapes and goes on a rampage. Featuring an outstanding music score! Dozens of horror/sci-fi films have been shot in the Philippines, this is undoubtedly the best.

**FACE OF TERROR** (1959) Lisa Gaye, Fernando Rey, Gerard Tichy. A schlocky but fun mixture of horror and science fiction. Rey plays a scientist who develops a serum that can eradicate scar tissue. He transforms a young girl's horribly disfigured face into a thing of beauty again. Unknown to him, she's an escaped lunatic from a local asylum. After her treatment, she escapes. Later on, her face starts to look rather odd. From 35mm.

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 69 (#DI-69)\*

**MAN WHO LIVED AGAIN** (1936 aka **DR. MANIAC**) Boris Karloff, Anna Lee, John Lodge. Boris lets it all hang out as he plays the mad Dr. Laurence, who invents a fantastic machine that will transfer personalities from one body to another. Great lab scenes and a terrific climax. One of the classic horror films of the 1930s. Never seen it? You're missing one helluva movie. Re-released on the Texas drive-in circuit in the 1950s as **DR. MANIAC**.

**THE HUMAN MONSTER** (1939 aka **THE DARK EYES OF LONDON**) Bela Lugosi, Hugh Williams, Greis Gynl. One of the best shockers of the 30s. Bela gleefully murders people and then throws them out his window onto the mud flats of the Thames. The setting is an eerie home for the blind. A hair-raising final sequence that still packs a jolt. Also widely re-released during the 1950s and 1960s. A dust-to-dust staple at many drive-ins.



## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 70 (#DI-70)

**DR. JEKYLL VS THE WEREWOLF** (1971) Paul Naschy, Jack Taylor. A man afflicted with lycanthropy becomes fired of turning into a snarling werewolf. He seeks out the grandson of the infamous Dr. Jeekyll in the hope of finding a cure. Better than usual Naschy effort. A beautiful transfer from a beautiful print.

**IT HAPPENED AT NIGHTMARE INN** (1972 aka **NIGHTMARE HOTEL**) Judy Geeson, Victor Alcazar. A grisly film in which murder victims are hidden in large containers of cooking wine. This chilling, Spanish horror film was upgraded a couple of years ago from a nice 16mm original print which contains approximately seven minutes more footage than our previous master.

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 71 (#DI-71)\*

**MONSTER FROM GREEN HELL** (1957) Jim Davis, Barbara Turner. Radiation in a certain region of Africa causes ordinary wasps to mutate into giant monsters that run amok, killing many of the local citizens. A scientific research expedition sets out to investigate. Good old 50s sci-fi schlock.

**HALF HUMAN** (1955) John Carradine, Morris Ankrum. A weird tale about a strange race of Japanese abominable snowmen and the attempts by man to capture and exploit them. American scientists Carradine and Ankrum explain what's going on. Some great outdoor monster shots. From 35mm.

## DOUBLE FEATURE NO. 72 (#DI-72)\*

**HANDS OF ORLAC** (1960) Mel Ferrer, Christopher Lee, Donald Wolf, Dany Carrel. A well done remake of **MAD LOVE** with Ferrer as the pianist with the transplanted criminal hands and Lee as the sleazy magician who blackmails him. Carrel has a body that won't quit. A slickly done British horror thriller you won't forget soon.

**THE TELL-TALE HEART** (1960) Lawrence Payne, Dermal Walsh. A very unusual and very entertaining adaptation of the classic Poe story. A shy loner discovers the girl he loves in the arms of his best friend. Murder and horror follow in dramatic fashion. Probably the best filmed version of this famous story.



THIS OFFER ABSOLUTELY ENDS AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT DECEMBER 31, 1995



# The Cat Behind the Door!

The Subtle Terrors  
of Val Lewton  
by Michael Brunas

The season of Val Lewton is upon us. The Russian-born story editor for David O. Selznick who, in the early 1940s, produced what is unquestionably the best sustained and least compromised slate of horror movies ever made on either side of the Atlantic, is being commemorated on all fronts.

This multi-media blitz is highlighted by McFarland Book's long-awaited Lewton career study, *Cloud Nine's* compact disc of the film scores of favored Lewton composer Roy Webb and, best of all, Image Entertainment's monumental laserdisc boxed set of Lewton's nine RKO horror movies.

Val Lewton's horror unit, which included directors Jacques Tourneur, Robert Wise, and Mark Robson, was set up to give Universal's monster mill a run for its money after *THE WOLF MAN* smashed box-office records in late 1941. Despite some initially mixed reviews (*New York Daily News* critic Wanda Hale was clearly in over her head with *CAT PEOPLE's* subtlety, awarding it a humiliating one-star rating), Lewton was dubbed the "Maharaja of Horror" by the ever-huckstering Hollywood trade press. But the critical elite, led by James Agee and Manny Farber, looked past the cheapjack, studio-imposed titles and lurid advertising art to the literate, poetic core lurking beneath. The producer was for a time recognized as one of the leading artistic forces in the industry—but Lewton died in 1951 without ever fulfilling his dream of graduating to the ranks of "A" productions.

The rise and tragic fall of Val Lewton has been chronicled in the past, most notably by Joel Siegel, whose out-of-print *Val Lewton, The Reality of Terror* (Viking Press, 1973) is one of the best—maybe the best—horror movie documents ever



**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Simone Simon keeps passion behind locked doors in *CAT PEOPLE* (1942). **LEFT:** Irena (Simon) creates a wonderland for Amy (Ann Carter) in *CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE* (1944). **RIGHT:** Ad art.

written. It's a daunting act to follow, but Edmund Bansak has produced a scholarly, worthy companion volume in *Fearing the Dark: The Val Lewton Career*. While covering much the same ground as Siegel, Bansak's emphasis is on a sensible, discerning analysis of Lewton's filmography. It's a major work and probably the best of McFarland's recent crop of releases.

The McFarland film books are usually authored by fans who squirrel themselves away in performing arts libraries and research centers in order to mine the minutia of their narrow field of research. The results of their enterprise puts a few dollars in the pocket of the writers who, if they are lucky, will sell a mere 1,000 or so books. Still, at their best, McFarland books are often the last word on the sort of subjects that mass-market publishers won't touch. The end product is inevitably a labor of love, but few writers wear their hearts on their sleeves as prominently as Mr. Bansak—who obviously had to eat, drink, and sleep Val Lewton movies for a very long time. In Bansak's case, the subject is truly worthwhile and his affinity for the material is almost palpable.

Bansak lays out the foundation of his material a little too extensively, needlessly detailing the careers of such peripheral figures as Orson Welles. (The publisher insisted on deep cuts in the author's manuscript.) Occasionally, the author's enthusiasm gets the better of him. He finds the Lewton influence anywhere and everywhere, but most often in other Hollywood movies. The breadth of Bansak's research, though, is impressive, and it is doubtful that anyone has come so close to defining and articulating the unique Lewton style. A model of fine writing and genuine dedication, *Fearing the Dark* is a McFarland release horror fans will feel compelled to own. At 600 pages, it's a surprisingly fast read.

Roy Webb figures prominently in the "second tier" of Hollywood composers. With over 300 movie credits to his name, Webb had a crack at every conceivable genre and composed the scores for all but one of Lewton's horror

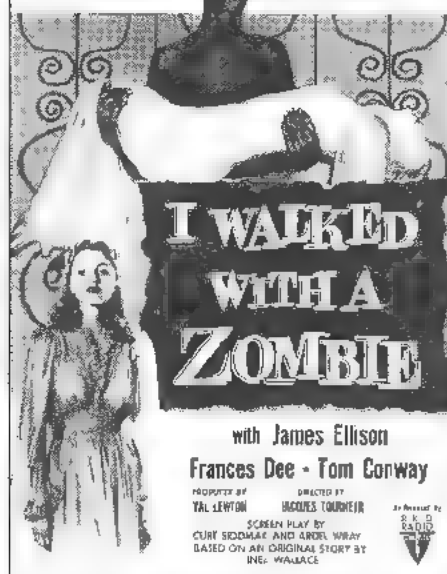
films. (The single exception, 1945's *ISLE OF THE DEAD*, was assigned to Disney veteran Leigh Harline.) Webb fit easily into the lush European orchestral mode of film scoring, sometimes hinting at a Max Steiner influence, yet his style was distinctly his own. Recordings of Webb's scores are scarce. Cloud Nine's anthology, *THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE: THE FILM MUSIC OF ROY WEBB*, deserves consideration despite the sonic limitations of the aging studio acetates used as source material.

The Cloud Nine release offers a generous 73 minutes of programming, but with 13 scores represented, things do get squeezed. The producer's treatment of *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG* (1949) is downright indecent. Long overdue for an entire disc of its own, Webb's rollicking score is here confined to a single 94-second track that, insultingly, fades out before it is even finished.

Webb's film noir work, which includes *CORNERED* (1945), *OUT OF THE PAST* (1947), *CROSSFIRE* (1947), and *THEY WON'T BELIEVE ME* (1947), fares better, though Webb's Main Title for *JOURNEY INTO FEAR* (1942) is little more than orchestral kitsch that wouldn't have made it on disc were it not for the film's association with Orson Welles. Fortunately, the disc rebounds nicely with a couple of fun tracks. *SINBAD THE SAILOR* (1947) is a delightfully sumptuous Arabian Nights concoction. Every bit as square-jawed as its hero, *DICK TRACY* (1945) delivers its clichés without a trace of self-parody, and is endearingly indicative of its period.

The remainder of the disc concentrates on Webb's work for Lewton, though Cloud Nine's failure to include Webb's ballad-laden score for *THE BODY SNATCHER* (1945) and the exotic voodoo rhythms of *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943) are glaring omissions. Of the Lewton titles included, *THE GHOST SHIP* (1943) suite is more than serviceable, its thick, mysterious textures well-suited to this film noir on the high seas. The prelude of *BEDLAM* (1946) turns out to be a rather playful

The blackest magic of voodoo  
keeps this beautiful girl  
alive... yet dead!





quasi-Baroque piece interrupted by an imperious, four-note motif suggesting Master Sims, the wickedly authoritarian keeper of the infamous 18th-century madhouse. The style of the piece is atypically stuffy for the composer; possibly the fact that *BEDLAM* was intended to be Lewton's last horror film before he was to be promoted to the studio's "A" ranks accounts for Webb's striving for a slightly pompous air.

It isn't until the 12-minute suite for *THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE* (1944) that the disc reveals its deepest treasures. The would-be sequel to *CAT PEOPLE* (1942) apparently caught the composer at the peak of his inspiration. Accenting strings, woodwinds, and a celeste, Webb fashioned an incredibly rich score that brilliantly evoked a child's inner world in all its beguiling innocence—and lurking terror. (The cue that follows the "Leaves Burning" scene is pure magic.) The sinister "Old Dark House" tracks provide a striking contrast, highlighted by Webb's musical witches' brew, which was played under actress Julia Dean's gooseflesh-raising reading of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

Neither the standard 33-man studio orchestra nor the antiquated monophonic recording of the period do the music full justice. One hopes that a full symphonic treatment of Webb's Lewton scores may one day afford the composer the treatment he deserves.

If nothing else, Image's six-disc Val Lewton Collection will win over a few

more video buffs to the laser format. Of the nine films included, only the long unavailable *THE GHOST SHIP* has not been issued previously. (Its presence will be enough to make hard-core Lewton buffs think twice about passing up the set.) A 48-minute interview with director Robert Wise is an added inducement.

Laser proponents are quick to tout the format's ability to reproduce "the theatrical experience," with emphasis on the latest wide-screen multichannel Hollywood megahits. What is overlooked is how the technology can likewise enhance classic black-and-white films, especially when they are as meticulously lit and detail-conscious as the Lewton series. For those who haven't seen a Lewton film since the days of those muddy C&C television prints, this set is nothing short of a revelation. The contrasts are luminous and the print quality is easily superior to earlier incarnations on prerecorded tape.

Still, any reassessment of Lewton must go beyond technical considerations. Part of the fun of watching any series of films is noting the common threads which inevitably crop up. Just as Hitchcock had his McGuffin, Lewton worked in his "bus" effect (an alarming, unexpected sound timed to a climactic moment, used most artfully in *CAT PEOPLE*) in nearly every movie.

On a less flippant level, the viewer can appreciate Lewton's penchant for instilling a literary flavor in each production. Whether it's the introduction to *THE BODY SNATCHER*, in which is quoted a suitable excerpt from a John Donne sonnet, or the end of *CAT PEOPLE*, which wraps with yet another Donne quote, Lewton's films are filled with literary allusions, often in the most unlikely places. If the Shakespeare-spouting radio operator in *THE GHOST SHIP* seems improbable, he is no more so than the bleak literary inscription mounted on the outside of a New York City mortuary in *THE SEVENTH VICTIM* (1943) or the full-length portrait of Dante hanging in a Greenwich Village Italian bistro (also in the latter film).

In a Lewton movie, the devil may indeed be in the details, but taking a step back to see the collective whole proves to be just as rewarding. Besides underscoring the unseen horrors in his photoplays, Lewton lent a European sensibility that was neither Expressionistic nor Gothic, but uniquely humanistic. Except for Boris Karloff's Cabman Gray, *THE BODY SNATCHER* of that film's title, few of Lewton's characters are actually evil, yet one is struck by how many of his characters are handicapped by their sheer inability to fit into society.

Who can forget the dreamy schoolgirl (played by Ann Carter) shunned by her classmates in *THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE*, the poet plagued with writer's block in *THE SEVENTH VICTIM*, or the mute sailor in *THE GHOST SHIP*? Surely, the mad general of *ISLE OF THE DEAD* (1945) "had his reasons" as did another Karloff villain, Master Sims of *BEDLAM*. In the latter film's climax, the lunatics turn on their master and, in a mock trial, the sadistic headmaster successfully alibis his own cruelty. (In a wonderful plot turn, the "loonies" declare him not guilty, but the beautiful, zombie like girl who was obviously a victim of Sims' debaucheries registers her own verdict in the form of a mason's trowel buried into his back.)



A true auteur, Lewton wrote the final drafts of all his scripts. He was that rarity in Hollywood: a literate, cultured producer who gently stamped his own personality on every project. A fish out of water in the movieland jungle, Lewton sympathized, perhaps even identified with, his characters—a sad, misunderstood lot of cat women, zombies, and failed poets who usually died in the final reel. If there is a common theme in Lewton's macabre fantasies, it is a heartfelt plea for tolerance.

Lewton's distaste for horror shows may have prompted him to eschew standard genre conventions. It's amazing how he was able to bamboozle the RKO executives for so long, passing off essentially non-horror films for the real thing. **THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE** is a probing tract on child psychology, **THE LEOPARD MAN** (1943) a highly stylized whodunit, and **THE GHOST SHIP** a brooding reimagining of Jack London's *The Sea Wolf*. Apparently, RKO didn't know a horror movie when it saw one, only the bottom line of a box-office phenomena such as **CAT PEOPLE**. In the end, it was Val Lewton who got the last laugh.

#### THE VAL LEWTON COLLECTION

Image Entertainment

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#### FEARING THE DARK

Edmund G. Bansak

McFarland & Company, Inc., 1995

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Jefferson, NC 28640

\$45—571 pages

#### THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE

Cloud Nine Records CNS 5008

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PREVIOUS PAGE: Boris Karloff is caught holding the bag in Val Lewton's **THE BODY SNATCHER** (1945). Trapped in Universal's horror sequels, Karloff felt that Lewton saved his career. RIGHT: Suave Dr. Louis Judd (Tom Conway) scoffs at Irena Dubrovna's tales of the **CAT PEOPLE** (1942).

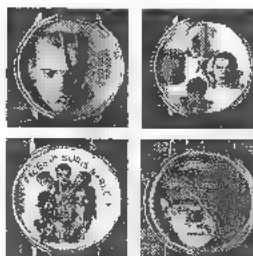
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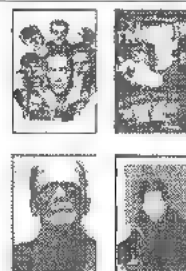
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# The Cat's Meow! Elizabeth Russell

interviewed by Alan Warren

Elizabeth Russell, dubbed the "Houri of Horror" by the *Hollywood Reporter*, is perhaps best remembered for her roles in four of the legendary Val Lewton's horror films at RKO.

Starting as a fashion model for the John Robert Powers agency in New York, Russell was given a screen test in 1936 and signed to a contract with Paramount. Her films were undistinguished, and she went back to modeling. ZaSu Pitts convinced Russell to return to films, and after appearing as the Countess Lorenz in Monogram's *THE CORPSE VANISHES* (1942) opposite Bela Lugosi, she made a memorable appearance in producer Lewton's *CAT PEOPLE* (1942) as the "cat woman," purring "moya sestra" to Simone Simon in a cafe. Four more Lewton features followed: *THE SEVENTH VICTIM* (1943), *THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE*, *YOUTH RUNS WILD* (both 1944), and *BEDLAM* (1946), the last with Boris Karloff. During this period, Russell also appeared in Universal's *WEIRD WOMAN* (1944), an Inner Sanctum mystery starring Lon Chaney Jr., and "stood in" for the ghost in Paramount's classic *THE UNINVITED* (1944). She also had supporting roles in *OUR VINES HAVE TENDER GRAPES* (1945), with Edward G. Robinson, and *ADVENTURE* (1945), with Clark Gable, but dropped out of movies in the early 1950s, returning only for *FROM THE TERRACE* (1960, directed by Lewton alumnus Mark Robson) and

*ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN* (1976), though her role in the latter was cut before release.

Elizabeth Russell lives today in Southern California, where she remains in contact with onetime Lew-



ton director Robert Wise. She appears occasionally at conventions, and has warm memories of the good old days at RKO . . .

*Scarlet Street:* What do you remember about making *THE CORPSE VANISHES*, which starred Bela Lugosi?

Elizabeth Russell: Very little. And as for Bela Lugosi—these men in person are just ordinary actors. They may seem a lot different on the screen, but not in person. I played a Russian woman with an accent. I hadn't worked in six months, so I

went down there to Monogram. I took it because I hadn't worked in so long. I was free-lancing. It was between things. I had a coach for the Russian accent. I remember.

SS: What led to your meeting Val Lewton and appearing in the classic *CAT PEOPLE*?

ER: We were out for dinner one night, at this Italian place on the strip, with Maria Montez. She was with Peter Viertel, Deborah Kerr's second husband, and I was with this German man with a title—a count or something. I didn't know him. Maria knew him. Anyway, we were sitting in a booth, and Maria said, "She doesn't know how beautiful she is." And someone else said, "You should be in pictures." That was very flattering, of course, and at one point one of the men said, "I have a friend named Val Lewton, and he's making a picture about cats, and you'd be perfect for it. You're exotic-looking." I said, "You mean I

look like a cat?" So I went to see Val Lewton the next day, and he offered me the part. That picture has become a classic. It's in the Museum of Modern Art, because it was the first psychological suspense film.

SS: There's that memorable scene in which you speak in cat-language.

ER: Well, you know, they dubbed me in that. They shot the scene, and then they dubbed in Simone Simon's voice over mine, because, since she was French, they thought she sounded more exotic, more foreign. Then, when Val and [director]





**THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE** (1944) offered Elizabeth Russell her most memorable screen role (as the troubled daughter of an actress played by Julia Dean), but for her it was simply another part.

Jacques Tourneur saw it, they both said, "Well, that was a mistake. We should have used your voice." But it was too late by then.

**SS:** What kind of man was Lewton?

**ER:** Val was an innovator. He pioneered the concept of the psychological film. But there were things about him that most people don't know. For example: one night Val wanted me to come to his home for dinner. Bob Wise and Mark Robson would both be there. Well, Val arrived with his son, who was about 12 years old; they lived at Rogers Ranch in the Palisades. And sometime that night he told me he was a Communist. At the time, it was a shocking thing, although I didn't think much of it until later. Communism was pervasive in radio and throughout academia, but it wasn't until later that I thought how grave it was to say that to me. There's kind of a sequel: many years later, I op-

ened a newspaper while I was living in Washington, D. C., and in the art section it said, "Val Lewton's showing of his paintings in Washington." And I wondered who this could be, because Val was long dead by then. So I called the art gallery, and it was his son, Val Lewton Jr. He invited me to his house, and it was there that I met Joel Siegel [author of *Lewton: The Reality of Terror*]. He was so annoyed, because he had just published his book, and he had been wanting to meet me and never had, and here I was, living right in Washington. So there's an irony for you.

**SS:** Many fans consider your role as Barbara Farren in *THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE* your finest hour.

**ER:** I didn't care one way or the other about it. My part was a little longer than in *CAT PEOPLE*, but that was about all. You know, for actors it's a very easy business once

you get the clue. There's a big difference between acting in films and stage acting.

**SS:** You appeared in *WEIRD WOMAN*, based on the classic Fritz Leiber novel *Conjure Wife*.

**ER:** We were hysterical on that film. We were so tired from laughing. Every time I think about that movie, I remember us getting overtime. Once the cast gets laughing, it's contagious. You get stopped completely, and so we were working until 11 o'clock. Evvie [Evelyn Ankers] and I had a hard time keeping a straight face all the way through it.

**SS:** The star was Lon Chaney Jr. Were there any problems with his drinking on the set?

**ER:** No, there were no problems with drinking. I didn't have any scenes with him. I didn't know him intimately.

**SS:** Were there any roles that you were mentioned for but didn't get?



LEFT: Elizabeth Russell made an early film appearance in *GIRL OF THE OZARKS* (1936). RIGHT: The role that put Russell on the horror map: the slinky Cat Woman of the Val Lewton classic *CAT PEOPLE* (1942).

ER: Oh, yes, many. I got so close to things and never got them. You wouldn't believe the things that can happen to you. I was up for one role, and they made an appointment for me to try out for it, and then, without telling me, they sent another actress and she got the job! I was making \$500 a week free-lancing. One picture I wanted was to be made at RKO

for Val Lewton. They wanted to put me under contract, but my agent held out for more than \$500, so I lost the part. I don't remember what it was. It may have been for *BODY SNATCHER*, I'm not sure. Then, another time, Universal was going to make a picture with Deanna Durbin. I went to see the director, and he wanted to use me, but the picture was delayed. So I went home, and one day I walked into 21 and the producer was sitting there, and he said, "What happened to you?" My agent never got in touch with me! So those things happen.

SS: Any more stories?

ER: Another time, at Paramount, Cecil B. DeMille was making a test of me to play the lead in a film, a Western. I don't remember who the male star was; it might have been Gary Cooper. Anyway, the female star was holding out—she wanted more money—and DeMille was going to put in one of the newcomers. Well, this story got out in the trade papers, and as soon as it did, she signed up for the part. That's the way it is in this business. One time, a guy sat down with me at a party. He said, "You don't come around and visit the producers." I said I didn't know you were supposed to. I had been on the Paramount lot and was under contract. I was with them for a year or two years. They started you off at \$200 a week, and I was making that much as a model. The contracts were for seven years, and it would go up to \$250 or

\$350, and then finally you were making \$600 or \$700 a week. Frances Farmer was rented out by Paramount, because putting you together with a star in a movie made you a star. Sam Goldwyn wanted Frances for *COME AND GET IT*, and Paramount made millions renting her out. That's what happened to Fred MacMurray. He got punch drunk going from one film to another. But so much in this business is based on luck. For example, there was a guy I was with one night, and we saw Dorothy Lamour singing in a nightclub, and he signed her up. It was like a roulette wheel. It had nothing to do with talent.

SS: Let's return to the Val Lewton films. You've described your role in *THE SEVENTH VICTIM*, that of a consumptive neighbor of Jean Brooks, as a "vignette."

ER: It was just a bit part, but when you worked with Val Lewton, he built it up. He made it into something. Tom Conway was in that, I remember. He was a nice man, but an alcoholic. I knew his brother [George Sanders] better. You wouldn't know they were brothers: they didn't look alike at all. Tom was a darling man, but he had this monkey on his back. George drank, but not to excess. He was interested in mathematics. He was very Russian; he had a Russian temperament. He was slow, but he was smart. I suppose George got disgusted with Tom's drinking.

SS: How well did you know Sanders?

ER: He was a beau of mine. He asked me six times to marry him.

SS: Was he always as dour as his reputation suggests?





LEFT: Lon Chaney Jr. has a sobering effect on Elizabeth Russell in the 1944 Inner Sanctum mystery **WEIRD WOMAN**, based on Fritz Leiber's *Conjure Wife*. RIGHT: Horror queens Evelyn Ankers and Elizabeth Russell.

ER: Well, I can tell you a story about him. He and a friend of mine, an Englishman, took Maria Montez and me out. We went to Olvera Street in Los Angeles, and there were orchestras, and George Sanders could do the tango! So could I, and George was so surprised somebody could do the tango. He could, because he was from the Argentine.

SS: Why did you break up?

ER: He picked up a girl when he was making **LLOYDS OF LONDON**, and she moved in with him, and I just didn't want any more to do with him after that.

SS: Your last film for Val Lewton was **BEDLAM**, in which you played your role for comedy.

ER: **BEDLAM** was directed by Mark Robson. Frankly, it was kind of a silly, tipsy drinking scene. I don't like those kinds of pictures. But if you do one kind, they can't think of you doing anything else. I free lanced for a while, and when I came back to Lewton I did the part.

SS: How did you like working with Boris Karloff?

ER: Boris Karloff was an Englishman. He was the star of the picture, and he didn't let you forget it. He had a lisp and he seemed so old. He had no truck with the rest of us; we were just players, and he was in love with himself.

SS: Was Lugosi friendlier than Karloff?

ER: Lugosi was very affable—and he had quite an accent! Well, he was Hungarian, wasn't he? But Karloff was pure English. To me, the English always spoke down to the Americans—you know, to the provinces.

SS: There are a lot of horror stories about working with child actors. What was

your experience with Ann Carter in **THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE**?

ER: Oh, well, she was a perfectly normal child. You wouldn't know she thought about spooky pictures at all! (Laughs)

SS: And what about Julia Dean, who played your mother?

ER: She was a famous actress at one time. I didn't know who she was, but Val Lewton knew her very well. She seemed to be pretty old, then, but now maybe she wouldn't seem that way. (Laughs) I didn't know her that well. I'll tell you a story: some writer wanted me to tell him where Jean Brooks was. I said, "You know, I never met her and I was in the same picture with her!" The only way I saw her was when I saw the film.

SS: Was the character of Mimi in Lewton's **THE SEVENTH VICTIM** supposed to be a streetwalker?

ER: She might have been. She had tuberculosis. She knew she was dying and she was going to go out and enjoy herself for the last time.

SS: You worked with such Lewton directors as Jacques Tourneur, Robert Wise, Mark Robson . . .

ER: Well, Mark and Bob had both been working in the cutting room and Val Lewton took them out of there. Now, Tourneur, he was a very good director.

SS: On **THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE**, you started with Gunther von Fritsch . . .

ER: That's right!

SS: . . . and then Robert Wise took over. Did you work with both of them?

ER: No. No, I only worked with Bob Wise. At the time, I was into astrology, because I was a friend of Maria Montez and she always had her

astrologer to lunch when I was there. He became the famous Carroll Righter. He was well known among the film crowd. Deitrich and Bob Cummings—he had his clients. Anyway, I was learning astrology, and when Bob Wise started on the picture I said, "You are starting a new career." He never forgot it! (Laughs) I can't get over myself!

SS: You might have had a second career as an astrologer.

ER: Well, I was learning it, and then one day I dropped it. I thought, "What am I interested in this for? I've already been through Nirvana and a few others and the Catholic nuns taught me everything I'll ever need to know!" (Laughs)

SS: Why did Robert Wise take over from von Fritsch?

ER: Von Fritsch wasn't doing what Val Lewton wanted. There was some disagreement about the connotation of words. Things can become very stressful on a set. . . .

SS: **THE CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE** is such a fine study of children and their loneliness.

ER: Yes, it was. And so many people live like that! Families, you know—and the child gets lost in a world of her own imagination.

SS: You kept coming back for more Lewton films.

ER: It's like the theater. If you once work with a director and he has a part available—well, he calls the actors he's worked with.

SS: The Lewton pictures are considered classics.

ER: I still get fan mail. I don't know what they do with all these signa-

Continued on page 108



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# An Actor and a rare one

"Ah, you rogue!" cried Jones, highly delighted. "You would have made an actor and a rare one."

—*The Sign of Four*

It was a three-pipe problem at the very least. Cast as Sherlock Holmes for a series of seven British television programs, the actor found that he neither liked the character of the world's first consulting detective nor shared any of his qualities. How, then, to play the part?

Jeremy Brett's solution was not, admittedly, a unique one, but it proved astonishing in its complexity, its totality: if you cannot become the character, Brett reasoned, let the character become you.

And with that, Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street became more fully realized, more completely a living, breathing, feeling human being than he had ever been before. Over the course of 41 episodes, from 1983 through 1994, Jeremy Brett reversed the old adage that warns of a character taking over the life of his interpreter, an adage that, in the case of Holmes, had claimed the "lives" of William Gillette and Basil Rathbone. This time, the interpreter took over the life of his character, lavishing upon him more vices, virtues, faults, and frailties than even his original creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, had dared imagine.

But always, always . . . just beneath the surface.

Interviewed on National Public Radio in 1991, Brett had said, "I'm so miscast. I'm a romantic, heroic actor. So I was terribly aware that I had to hide an awful lot of me."

Brett had described himself as a "becomer," a "sponge" who draws out the liquid of his own personality and draws in the liquid of the character he plays. But Brett had also (and often) described Sherlock Holmes as a hollow shell, one presumably free of emotional moisture. And so the actor filled his Sherlockian sponge with the very elements of heroism and romance that made his Holmes spring dramatically to life. The play of emotions across Brett's face as he apologized to Watson for pretending to be dead, as he listened to some unexpected words of praise from Lestrade, as he was bested in a game of deduction by brother Mycroft—this, above all, is what drew us to the series. Yes, the production values were impressive. Yes, the scriptwriters stayed reasonably faithful to Conan Doyle's original mysteries . . . but the true mystery lay in the Great Detective himself, the suspense in never quite knowing how this particular Holmes would react to any given situation. Had anyone before Brett shown Holmes so thoroughly shaken by the death of a client? Had anyone had the audacity to call Watson by his Christian name, or the skill to make it work?

Thanks to Brett, Sherlock Holmes had regained his ability to surprise us. Age, after all, had not withered nor custom staled his infinite variety.

Neither will death.

Jeremy Brett died in his sleep on Tuesday, September 12, 1995, of heart failure. He was 59. His last interview begins on the following page. A tribute will run in the next issue of *Scarlet Street*.

—Richard Valley



# Dancing In The Moonlight Jeremy Brett

*A Last Talk with David Stuart Davies and Jessie Lilley*

In the world of television and movies there come moments when there is a magical yoking of star to vehicle—a combination which enriches each element and the result elevates both. Without doubt, this happened in the early '80s when Granada Television in Britain gave producer Michael Cox his head to set up a Sherlock Holmes series and to give the leading part to actor Jeremy Brett.

Cox's vision of the series was clear and central to its success: to put the Sherlock Holmes of Arthur Conan Doyle's imagination on the screen. There would be no Rathbone-like updating, no playing around with the hero's sexuality, no preposterous new plots. It was to be pure Conan Doyle. It had never been done before on television with such style, such fidelity—such effect! In Brett, Cox had not only chosen an actor of consummate skill and suitably Sherlockian appearance, but also a champion of the original texts. Together, these men created a unique and very special project.

Originally, 13 episodes were planned, concluding with *THE FINAL PROBLEM*, in which Holmes and his incredibly arch archenemy Professor James Moriarty (Eric Porter) tumbled over into the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland. (This pivotal struggle was actually filmed at the falls and remains one of the most dramatic of stunt scenes ever filmed for television). By the time David Burke, in his persona as Dr. John H. Watson, was shedding a tear for the very wet and very dead Sherlock, wheels were turning in preparation for more programs. The series had not only been a critical success, but, in television terms more importantly, a commercial one. Overseas sales were tremendous.

With the coffers at Granada filling up very nicely, thank you, it is no wonder that they dried out the famous sleuth, gave him a clean set of clothes, and brought about *THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*. We had a new Watson in Edward Hardwicke, a gentle actor who really made the part his own and stayed with it until the end. By now, Mich-

time that the Sherlocks had now finished. But they hadn't. The two-hour special of *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* was completed within the same year (1988). *THE HOUND* is without doubt the great disappointment of the whole series. Even now, the participants are aggrieved that a great opportunity to place the definitive version of Conan

Doyle's Gothic masterpiece on film was muffed. Michael Cox was hemmed in by financial constraints; writer Trevor Bowen felt that the need for rewrites took the backbone out of the story; and for Jeremy Brett, it remained the one film he would dearly have liked to reshoot: "We should have made more of the Hound. I'm not sure how you treat it. Perhaps the best way is not to show the hound at all."

It was also clear, watching *THE HOUND*, that Jeremy himself was not at all well. Suddenly, it seemed, the sleek fellow who had fascinated Irene Adler (Gayle Hunnicutt) and had raced over the Derbyshire countryside in *THE PRIORY SCHOOL* had become stout, bloated of face, and perceptively slower. This transformation was a result of drug treatment that Brett was receiving for his health problems. He was retaining water to an

alarming extent; on his own admission, he was like a "bloated Buddha." Some critics were cruel about this, while the viewers were a little puzzled. Sadly, Jeremy never got back his lithe self. In Peter Haining's book *The Television Sherlock Holmes*, he stated: "I apologize for not being as lean as I should have been in the last twenty films."

Chubby or not, Brett continued to fascinate as Holmes and, with Michael Cox back in the producer's chair, we saw *THE CASEBOOK* series in 1991. With regard to the sto-

Photos © Granada Television International



ael Cox had become executive producer and June Wyndham Davies was producer. This team produced the marvelous two-hour special of *THE SIGN OF FOUR*. *THE RETURN* ran for two series. To the sensitive viewer, there was a slight falling off. The stories were not as good, not quite as engrossing as the earlier series; Brett had his hair clipped for some reason, appearing as Shortlocks Holmes.

With the completion of *THE RETURN*, we were told for the first





**LEFT:** David Burke was Dr. John H. Watson in the first 13 programs in the Sherlock Holmes series, making his final appearance in *THE FINAL PROBLEM*. **RIGHT:** When Holmes returned from a watery grave in *THE EMPTY HOUSE*, Edward Hardwicke was the Watson who greeted him. **CENTER:** Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes.

ries chosen, the words "scraping" and "barrel" come to mind. But with regard to performances, luxuriance of settings, and sheer watchability, the shows were splendid. In this series, *THE ILLUSTRIOUS CLIENT* must rate as one of the best in the whole set of films.

Michael Cox left and the Independent Television Network were unsure what they wanted from Granada next. Again, we were told that Sherlock was done. Brett, unwell and exhausted after a long London run and national tour with Jeremy Paul's play *THE SECRET OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*, was fed up with Holmes, too. It was *The End* again.

The *INSPECTOR MORSE* series of two-hour detective features, starring John Thaw, was doing very well at this time so the powers that be ultimately requested a two-hour Sherlock. Our mouths dropped when we learned that the 17-page story "Charles Augustus Milverton" was to be a Brett/Holmes special. With clever weaving and teasing by scriptwriter Jeremy Paul (who renamed it *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*), and a superb Milverton in Robert Hardy, the program was surprisingly good and well received.

Sadly, this two-hour success led to two further features, the dodgy *LAST VAMPYRE* (based on "The Sussex Vampire") and the awful *ELIGIBLE BACHELOR* (based on "The Noble Bachelor"). With various

pressures of time, financial constraints, and no Conan Doyle lodestar to guide them, the team, with an increasingly ailing star, turned out a couple of oven-ready turkeys.

Brett, bruised by the mauling he received from the press, the fans, and Dame Jean Conan Doyle, vowed to do only Conan Doyle ever again . . . but there would never be an again, because the Sherlocks had outlived their sell-by date. So it was *The End* yet again.

Until . . . June Wyndham Davies was given the go-ahead for a series of six one-hour shows in the summer of 1993. So *THE MEMOIRS* got underway—after a fashion. In many ways, the series was a disaster and a nightmare for June and Jeremy. To start with, Edward Hardwicke was not available for *THE GOLDEN PINCE NEZ*, and so Mycroft in the iceberg-size form of Charles Gray was towed in as a substitute. Brett suffered failing health throughout the series, having breathing difficulties because of the heat during the filming of *THE THREE GABLES*, fainting into Roy Hudd's arms in *THE DYING DETECTIVE* (a title that almost came prophetically true), and being too ill to appear in *THE MAZARIN STONE*. Frantic with worry over costs and deadlines, June Wyndham Davies asked Gary Hopkins to rewrite his script to feature Mycroft instead of Sherlock: "The Giant Hulk Investigates." What

made this film worse was that Hopkins had interpolated another story—"The Three Garridebs"—into the plot, also. It was a mess, and it was a Brett-less mess, too!

Jeremy Brett spent Christmas 1993 in hospital. He was released just in time to finish the series. Filming on alternate days, looking much thinner but tired, he completed *THE CARDBOARD BOX*, the last Sherlock Holmes film, in February 1994.

It was *The End* . . . again.

Sadly, this time there will be no reprieve. Granada had lost interest in Holmes, despite the series being one of its biggest earners. More importantly, more irrevocably, Jeremy Brett's health had so deteriorated that, even if he had been willing, he was not physically capable of taking on the demanding role again.

"It's called cardiomyopathy—the slow disintegration of the heart—and it's inoperable. The only cure is a heart transplant and that's far too dramatic even for me!"

Jeremy Brett died in his sleep of heart failure on Tuesday, September 12, 1995. He was 59 years old. I last met with him in his lovely London apartment earlier this year and asked him for his thoughts and memories of the Granada series. (This interview was later augmented by several telephone chats the actor had with *Scarlet Street* publisher Jessie Lilley.) What Brett told me was, as always, fascinating.



LEFT: The rose soliloquy from *THE NAVAL TREATY*, a first-season episode. RIGHT: What did Holmes really feel for Irene Adler (played by Gayle Hunnicutt, with Wolf Kahler as the King of Bohemia)?

We begin with that lovely fruity Brett laugh: "The first thing I'd like to say—it's a followup to something you wrote for a past issue of *Scarlet Street* about the first episode we did: *THE SOLITARY CYCLIST*. The Baker Street set was so unbelievably squeaky clean that it looked as though it had just been built. It looked so false—no rain, no dust, no sense of reality. It looked so 'setty!' However, once a good old Manchester winter had had a go at it, it began to look real."

I suggested that the same could be said of the interior set, which looked more dog-eared and lived in as the series progressed. "Yes, yes . . . but we worked on making that lovely carpet look threadbare."

The marvelous thing about talking to Jeremy Brett was that he was Mr. Stream-of-Consciousness and one thing unnaturally led to another. However, I was *Scarlet Street*-conscious of my masters who required certain information (hence those telephone chats), so I tried to steer my host to answer certain questions: like, for instance, did he believe, as he stated very early in the series, that Sherlock Holmes had very little in common with Jeremy Brett?

**Jeremy Brett:** I suppose the only thing that I *do* have is enthusiasm: mine is for life, his is for work. He's dead when he's not working in that sense, he is like an actor. But I've had a fascinating time playing him. I said to Dame Jean Conan

Doyle: "I've danced in the moonlight with your father for 10 years." The moonlight, not the sunlight—Holmes is a very dark character.

**Scarlet Street:** Did you get to know him better as you played him?

**JB:** I got to know how to play him. I crawled into every corner of my imagination to find out what had made him. I have this whole history of him as a child, which I use to fill this chasm—to find out what he's made of. He's very private. To help to discover what he's like inside, I had this whole story of his life. He was tied very tight as a child in the cot—as they used to in those days, to keep them quiet. Children were seen but not heard—especially in the Holmes household, which I've always placed in my mind in Cornwall . . . very remote. A bleak house. Never knew his father at all until he was 21. Saw him, but never spoke to him. He had an elder brother who was fat and a little bit far ahead of him. They didn't have much in common, either. They were kissed by their mother on her way down to dinner, but that's all. Isolation from a very early age. Typical Victorian upbringing. I think he had more in common with his mother—she was the brains—but, of course, women were not allowed to say much in those days and this reserve rubbed off on Sherlock.

**SS:** What would you say Sherlock's father was like?

**JB:** His father was a fat ex-army toad, I think. Anyway, he escaped to

Eton—or one of the major public schools. He was a spidery person, with no color in his face, no friends—scared of friendship—but brilliant at certain subjects. Brilliant at fencing and boxing, but always the person who walked away from personal encounters. He was devastatingly unattractive: white as a sheet, spotty probably, with all of the complications of puberty with no one to guide him through it. Probably loved singing—the choir.

**SS:** What about Sherlock Holmes' university life?

**JB:** University. I would think Oxford. Oxford is darker; Cambridge is too full of light. Then brilliance—growing—mind developing—debating societies. Probably saw a girl, a woman, who he fancied, but she didn't "see" him. That one rejection did it. The one time he placed himself in a vulnerable situation and to see her turn away and choose somebody else snapped that door to like a steel trap, never to be opened again. What should he do, now? Return home to his family and take up some dreary duties associated with the estate? He wanted to escape that. Mycroft, ahead of him, had escaped: he'd waddled out of university and managed to get a junior post in the current government. Mycroft had also joined a club only a Holmes would join: one in which no one spoke.

**SS:** *The Diogenes Club.*

**JB:** Sherlock, isolated as he was now, forced himself to find his own

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**LEFT:** Rosalie Williams played Mrs. Hudson throughout the Granada series. **RIGHT:** The late Eric Porter made the part of Professor Moriarty his own, appearing in *THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE* and *THE FINAL PROBLEM*.

way—his own job—and therefore become himself.

*SS: How, then, does this lonely, isolated figure end up sharing rooms with Dr. Watson?*

*JB: Oh, purely financial—I am certain of that*

*SS: But he grew to like the good doctor.*

*JB: Actually, I don't think Holmes ever had all that much time for Wat-*

*son. He's got used to Watson like an old boot, but he really treats him extremely badly. To use the phrase of mine you've used before, I really bent the willow here. I think Holmes could cope perfectly well without Watson—but he's useful for the rent. He bounces ideas and tests his brilliant deductions out on Watson as if he were Joe Average. There*

*are very few incidents in the Canon—very few indeed—when there is a glimmer of real warmth for Watson. I had to create more in the series. I had to play Holmes as though he would fall apart if Watson left; but as the stories are written, I don't believe that is the case. Watson is a necessary evil in the plan—to get the stories printed, but as Doyle writes*

**LEFT:** Charles Gray brought Mycroft Holmes to life in four episodes, completely taking Sherlock's place in *THE MAZARIN STONE*. **RIGHT:** Colin Jeavons was a magnificent Inspector Lestrade in six episodes.



Holmes he is invulnerable. His relationship with Watson—and indeed Mrs. Hudson—in the Canon is minimal. He is in essence that cold, isolated figure from the university. That's how Doyle wrote him: impregnable, invulnerable, and enigmatic. To give him emotions lessens the portrait. He is a man who every man envies.

SS: That would have been difficult to capture on film.

JB: You have to relate as an actor, and therefore you have to fill up what Robert Stephens called "that hollow space." Robert cracked up during the filming of the Billy Wilder film [1970's *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*] because of his struggle to fill that "hollow space," that inner life. It's all edifice. There's nothing inside.

SS: How did you manage it?

JB: I've had to pick up things from other work and my imagination to bring him to life. I took a lot from when I played Dracula. I had the pointed shoes and I walked like a cat as Dracula. I often do as Holmes—like in *THE NORWOOD BUILDER*, when I walk along the railing. I've looked for cracks in the veneer to allow me to say more about the character. In *THE SOLITARY CYCLIST*, when I'm holding Violet Smith's hand making deductions about spatulate finger ends, I tried to portray the fact that Holmes found the touch sensuous. Likewise, I was aware of the disturbance felt by Mrs. Phelps when I talk about the rose in *THE NAVAL TREATY*.

SS: What about Irene Adler?

JB: Well, there was the great shock to him in *A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA*, when, dressed as an old clergyman, he is ministered to by Irene Adler. Now Holmes has never been so close to a female breast before. She's close to him—this beautiful woman with all the sweet essences of her sex. What is going on in his head at that moment? Confusion? Uncertainty? Is this onslaught of femininity the reason he refers to her as "the woman?" I learned to question these things when playing Holmes.

SS: You certainly brought new aspects to Holmes, but also in playing such a famous character there are certain elements that are expected. You definitely avoided wearing the deerstalker.

JB: Michael Cox and I decided to follow the Paget drawings, which we

did. The deerstalker is only worn in the country.

SS: That's fair enough, but in *THE LAST VAMPIRE* Holmes was abroad in the country and there were no Pagets to relate to—yet you wore your topper instead of the deerstalker.

JB: That was because I was so fat. I would have worn a lighter coat and possibly a deerstalker, but I had to stay in the black to hide the fatness. But, you know, I've always thought of the deerstalker as a kind of school-boy cap that can be scrunched up and put in your pocket. The ones you see today are sort of reinforced; you certainly couldn't slip those easily in



Thanks to Jeremy Brett, Sherlock Holmes and Count Dracula share a taste in footwear.

your pocket. But I always wanted to avoid the clichés when playing Holmes, and I really didn't like the image. I know it irritated one or two directors desperately. One of them—can't remember who—had the cap run over! All I did was to veer away from it. I did do the meerschaum pipe for a brief moment in *THE FINAL PROBLEM*, because he could have bought it out in Switzerland.

SS: Not everyone knows that, in addition to doing the Granada series, you also appeared as the Great Detective on stage in *THE SECRET OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*.

JB: Ted and I—Edward Hardwicke and I did the play for a year and a half. We did a year in London, and that had a pre-London tour, and then four months afterwards.

SS: *THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*, which is airing this fall on MYSTERY!, will be the final six episodes of the series.

JB: The heroine of these last six is June Wyndham Davies, without whom they would not have been made. She's a sensation. We only were asked to do three. She got six. She then lost her Watson and I nearly died—so the whole thing is a miracle. An absolute miracle.

SS: Edward Hardwicke's Watson doesn't appear at all in *THE GOLDEN PINCE-NEZ*. He was replaced by Charles Gray as Mycroft Holmes.

JB: Of course, *THE PINCE-NEZ* is a very strong story. I was thrilled to have Mycroft near me because my darling Watson was off becoming a movie star.

SS: That's right! Hardwicke was playing Anthony Hopkins' brother in *SHADOWLANDS*.

JB: I was thrilled to have Mycroft. What was interesting, and probably not known—I asked the powers that be if I could switch my speech about the deduction of the pince nez and give it to Charles Gray. And he did it brilliantly. Because, after all, Mycroft is the brains of the family. So that's a little twist there.

SS: Tell us, which were your favorite episodes with your different Dr. Watsons, David Burke and Edward Hardwicke?

JB: I cannot possibly choose. They were both splendid Watsons in their own individual way. There are moments I'm fond of. I loved the way David stood up for me in *THE DANCING MEN*, when the local police didn't know who I was. He stepped forward: "This is Sherlock Holmes." I was very touched by his performance in *THE FINAL PROBLEM*. Ted's faint and obvious relief at his friend's return in *THE EMPTY HOUSE* was also very touching. He showed such vulnerability. He was so very good in *THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL*, which is one of the best we ever did. Ted really didn't want to play Watson; he was a reluctant hero. Both Watsons were so anxious not to appear as a fool or a bore.

Concluded next issue ...  
plus a tribute to  
**Jeremy Brett**

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- 3) **THE RAVEN** (1963) Vincent Price, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Jack Nicholson-Roger Corman's "Masterpiece of Terror"! Spectacular poster art! \$45
- 4) **STRIPORAMA** (1950's) BETTY PAGE!, Lil' SL Cyr, Georgia Southern- See the strip-tease queens in action! Rare riving Klav classic! **NAKED AMAZON**- "Raw Primitive Nudism Never Before Seen on the Screen!"
- 5) **ALL NEW TRIPLE TERROR THRILLS** (1950's spook-show) "In Person: Dracula! Alive! The Wolf Man! Direct From Hollywood! The Frankenstein Monster on the Loose! Giant Chiller Scream Show!" (Rare!)
- 6) **TWIST ALL NIGHT** (1961) Fabulous poster of sexy June Wilkinson in pin-up poses from this outrageous showcase for the twist craze!
- 7) **GIMME SHELTER** (1971) The classic Rolling Stones rockumentary! Great poster!
- 8) **BEACH PARTY** (1963) Annette Funicello, Frankie Avalon, Brian Wilson, Dick Dale & the Deltones- "Uninhibited Pagan Rites Performed Each Spring by uncivilized Boys & Girls!" The very first of those great AIP beach movies.
- 9) **THE ANGRY RED PLANET** (1960) Early color sci-fi shocker with extraordinary special effects! Astronauts battle giant bat/rat/spider animals on Mars!
- 10) **DRAGSTRIP RIOT** (1968) Connie Stevens, Fay Wray- "Motorcycle Gangs, Hot Rodders, Death, Romance and Redemption /THE COOL & THE CRAZY "Seven Savage Punks on a Weekend of Violence!" Terrific poster art!
- 11) **THE WEIRD WORLD OF LSD** (1967) Remember sitars, Woodstock, damaged chromo-somes? (Oops!) Outrageous anti-drug propaganda flick!
- 12) **THE BRAIN FROM PLANET ARCUS** (1958) John Agar- A giant floating brain (with eyes!) takes over the body of a scientist as its first step in conquering Earth. (Eek!)/**TEENAGE MON-STER** "Teenage Titan of Terror on a Lustful Singlet"
- 13) **BIKINI BEACH** (1964) Annette Funicello, Frankie Avalon- The third beach party movie and one of the best! "The Beach Party Gang Goes Dragstrip"
- 14) **BEACH BLANKET BINGO** (1965) Annette Funicello, Frankie Avalon, Buster Keaton- Best of the Beach Party movies! Twistin' surfin' and skydivin'!
- 15) **DR. DRACULA'S LIVING NIGHTMARES SHOW** (1950's spook-show)- "You Dare Not Look Into His Eyes! On Stage & In Person! Beauties at the Mercy of Inhuman Monsters! Super Scary!" (RARE!)
- 16) **BORN LOSERS** (1967) The introduction of Billy Jack and one of the all-time best of the 1960's biker films! Fabulous poster with bikini girl and bikers!
- 17) **THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE** (1963) A sci-fi/horror classic! The fun begins when a mad surgeon keeps his fiancée's disembodied head alive and taking after their car wreck! **INVASION OF THE STAR CREATURES** Amazon women under the control of vegetable-headed aliens! One of our favorite posters!
- 18) **CAREER GIRL** (1959) That buxom June Wilkinson shows off her best assets in this steamy poster! June heads for Hollywood to find fame and fortune and ends up at a nudist colony! "You Have to See it to Believe it!"
- 19) **REFORM SCHOOL GIRL** (1957) "Caged Boy-Hungry Wildcats Gone Mad!" **ROCK AROUND THE WORLD** "Wild Pulse-Pounding Rock & Roll!" A fabulous poster!
- 20) **ROAD RACER/DADDY-O** (1958) Hot babes, sportscars, drag racing and rock & roll: all in one fabulous poster! What more could you want?
- 21) **TEENAGE THUNDER** (1958) "Revved-Up Youth on a Thrill Rampage!" Teen story of hot rods, speeding and drag races! **CARNIVAL ROCK**- Susan Cabot & Jonathan Haze in Roger Corman's classic flick of rock & roll, mixed-up love, gamblers, arson and rockabilly!
- 22) **X: THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES** (1953) Ray Milland- "Suddenly He Could See Through Clothes, Flesh and Walls!" A knock-out poster!
- 23) **REPTILICUS** (1962) Before Jurassic Park, there was Reptilicus! "A Prehistoric Beast Born 50 Million Years Out of Time!" Run for your lives!!
- 24) **HORRORS OF THE ORIENT** (1950's spook-show) "On Stage & In Person! The Hollywood Wolf Man! The Hunchback Igor! The Living Zombie on the Loose! NOTICE We Urge You Not to Panic or Bolt From Your Seats! Sensational! Weird!" (RARE!)
- 25) **BLACK SABBATH** (1964) Boris Karloff in tales of a vengeful corpse, phone calls from the dead and a vampire! Creepy!
- 26) **GLORY STOMPERS** (1967) Dennis Hopper pre-"Easy Rider" as a motorcycle gang leader "Saddle Your Hogs and Ride, Man!" The ultimate biker poster!
- 27) **JASON & THE ARGONAUTS** 1963) A Ray Harryhausen masterpiece with Todd Armstrong and Honor Blackman searching for the Golden Fleece and meeting up with purple winged harpies, a merman, a bronze giant and a 7-headed hydra!
- 28) **SORORITY GIRL** (1957) Susan Cabot as a high school hottie whose specialties are out-fights and paddling (Hmmm!)/**MOTORCYCLE GANG**- Twisted teenage sex drag racing and drug violence! Like wow Daddy-O!
- 29) **TALES OF TERROR** (1962) Vincent Price, Basil Rathbone, Peter Lorre in 3 Poe tales involving a live burial! a hypnotist and Price melting into an oozing faceless mess! A really

outstanding poster!

- 30) **DIE MONSTER DIE** (1965) Boris Karloff, Nick Adams- H.P. Lovecraft thriller! "The Ultimate in Diabolism!" **PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES**- Barry Sullivan- Crazy astronauts, disembodied aliens and giant skeletons!
- 31) **THE HALLUCINATION GENERATION** (1966) George Montgomery makes like Tim Leary and leads his youthful followers into a psychedelic pill party!
- 32) **ANGELS FROM HELL** (1966) "He's a Cycle Psychol!" Violent Vietnam vet starts motorcycle gang and battles rival bikers and cops!
- 33) **THUNDER ALLEY** (1967) Annette Funicello- "Their God is Speed...Their Pleasure is an "Anytime Girl" Lurid poster art of party girls and hot rods.
- 34) **TIME TRAVELERS** (1964) Excellent sci-fi story of scientists who journey into the post-nuke future! "See! Women Who Use the Love Machine to Aways the Male Shortage!" (Kinky!) Fantastic sci-fi/horror poster art!
- 35) **THE BIG TNT SHOW** (1966) One of the best 1960's concert films! Features The Byrds, Donovan, Ronettes, Bo Diddley, Lovin' Spoonful, Ike & Tina & more!
- 36) **A BUCKET OF BLOOD** (1959) Roger Corman's predecessor to "The Little Shop Of Horrors" with beatniks, coffeehouses and gruesome "sculptures" **THE GIANT LEECHES**- Humongous leeches capture girls and suck their blood! (Yuck)
- 37) **CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED** (1963) Eerie well-made chiller about demonic space-seed children who seek to rule the Earth! (Yikes!)
- 38) **HOUSE OF USHER** (1960) Roger Corman's first Poe movie! Vincent Price buries his sister alive in this classic chiller!
- 39) **THE LONGEST DAY** (1962) John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Rod Steiger, Robert Mitchum, Sean Connery and loads more in this all-star classic WWII blockbuster!
- 40) **BLACK SUNDAY** (1961) Barbara Steele is a witch who returns from the grave to seek revenge after being burned at the stake! Beautifully atmospheric
- 41) **THE PIT & THE PENDULUM** (1961), Vincent Price, Barbara Steele- Price becomes convinced that his scheming wife has been buried alive. He proceeds to go berserk in a giant torture chamber. One of Roger Corman's best!
- 42) **SKI PARTY** (1965) Frankie Avalon, Yvonne "Batgirl" Craig, Dwayne Hickman, James Brown, Lesley Gore- Another classic beach party movie with Frankie and Dwayne going in drag! Like wow, Daddy-O!
- 43) **COMEDY OF TERRORS** (1964) Vincent Price, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Basil Rathbone- Two undertakers and their bumbling assistant turn to murder to bring in new customers!
- 44) **HAUNTED PALACE** (1963) Vincent Price as a warlock who returns from the grave seeking revenge against the villagers who had burned him at the stake! A Roger Corman classic also starring Debra Paget and Lon Chaney Jr.
- 45) **THE ABC'S OF LOVE** (1952) Vintage burlesque film with 4 gorgeous strippers posing on the poster! "Adults Only! See Burlesque's Sexiest Blonde!"
- 46) **CIRCUS OF HORRORS** (1960) One of the big three unforgettable sick British shockers dealing with voyeurism, physical deformities and murders!
- 47) **HOW TO STUFF A WILD BIKINI** (1965) Annette Funicello, Dwayne Hickman, The Kingmen, Brian Wilson, Buster Keaton- The craziest of the beach movies!
- 48) **PANIC IN THE YEAR ZERO** (1962) Ray Milland, Frankie Avalon- One of the earliest and best post-nuclear holocaust films! Poster art depicts atomic blast leveling Los Angeles. "When Civilization Came to an End!"
- 49) **QUEEN OF BLOOD** (1966) Basil Rathbone, Dennis Hopper, Forrest J Ackerman - Astronauts go to Mars and bring home green alien woman who drains their blood! **BLOOD BATH**- Roger Corman's tale of a crazed artist and his wax-covered murder victims who come back to life! (and boy are they mad!)
- 50) **DEVIL'S ANGELS** (1967) Killer bikers head for hideout smashing everything in their way! Lurid and trashy graphics!
- 51) **DIARY OF A BACHELOR** (1964) "He played the game of love like it was Russian Roulette, with pretty girls instead of ammunition!" Great girls poster!
- 52) **MESA OF LOST WOMEN** (1952) This girls/sci-fi cult classic is considered by many to be the ultimate grade "Z" thriller! Mad scientist Jackie "Uncle Fester" Coogan creates a race of scantily-clad spider women. "Super Women Who Kissed and Killed!" Features Katherine Victor (of "Wild World of Batwoman" and "Teen Age Zombies" fame) and Mona McKinnon (from "Plan 9 From Outer Space") We've only seen this super-rare poster up for sale once when it sold in a 1992 Hollywood auction for \$200. This is a "jumbo window card" (22" X 28") with spectacular lurid graphics. Our special price: only \$98.

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# Portrait of Jennie

The storm-swept sea rises threateningly before Eben Adams. His small skiff seems hardly adequate to the task ahead, but turning back is not an alternative. Her life—indeed, his life—now hangs on the small chance that he will reach Land's End Light.

Somehow, more through instinct and luck than skill, he finds himself approaching the rocky island. Through the fog and spray he begins to make out the shape of the lighthouse, dark and desolate. In an instant, a monstrous swell lifts the boat high into the blackness, and he finds himself sprawled at the base of a huge crag, his dory in splinters, his body aching.

Eben pulls himself to his feet, groping among the jagged rocks until he reaches the lighthouse. With strength that comes seemingly from nowhere, he climbs to the rusted, ancient door. Once inside the towering structure, he calls to her, his mournful cry swallowed by the noise of crashing surf.

As he starts up the circular staircase, a curious silence descends upon him. Reaching the top, he realizes that the wind and rain have stopped. He looks out over the foggy expanse of sea and calls to her once more. Then he sees it—ghostly, silent, gliding out of the fog, floating toward the shore on the calm, black water. Eben Adams realizes with a renewed clearness of mind that this is no apparition, nor an illusion created by a desperate heart. This is real. He is looking at Jennie's boat—years after it was swallowed up by the great wave that took the young girl's life!

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The formula for producing an artistically, critically, and financially successful film has always been an elusive one. Potential triumphs have sometimes been delivered still-born, some becoming "sleepers" that find a life of their own years after their initial box-office flop. Others round the corner into relative obscurity. But there is also a curious limbo between these two worlds, a cinema purgatory where a film's value remains forever debated, where a hard-core contingent keeps the flame burning for a widely neglected work.

PORTRAIT OF JENNIE, released in 1948 by the Selznick Releasing Organization, is nestled in this last

category—loved and revered by many, but more generally looked on as a flawed and dated curiosity.

In actuality, it was a large studio's ambitious adaptation of a lyrical short fantasy novel by American writer and poet Robert Nathan, an enterprise plagued by rewrites, reshoots, and indecision caused in part by the head of a studio on the verge of financial collapse. Many feel that the film could have been better, dialogue im-

proved, and ragged edges trimmed, but the final result is still a powerfully haunting fantasy, a film which, once let into the heart, remains a lifelong favorite.

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The setting is New York City, the year 1934. Artist Eben Adams (Joseph Cotten), down on his luck, visits art dealers Matthews and Spinney (Cecil Kellaway and Ethel Barrymore, respectively). Mr. Matthews is not interested in Adams' seascapes and still-lives, but Miss Spinney buys one, telling Eben that he has promise but lacks inspiration. When Matthews later complains that the painting is probably not worth more than a few dollars, Spinney replies, "Yes, but Adams is."

Walking home through Central Park, Eben encounters a young girl who calls herself Jennie (Jennifer Jones) and is dressed in old-fashioned clothes. She asks to see his paintings. One, a

Cape Cod lighthouse, depresses her. They walk on together and she sings a strange song.

Where I come from nobody knows,  
And where I am going everything goes.  
The wind blows, the sea flows,  
Nobody knows.

Jennie makes a wish that Eben will wait for her to grow up, "so we can always be together," and walks on ahead, leaving Eben to retrieve a scarf and newspaper that she has left behind. When he looks for her, she is gone. Moved, he draws a sketch of the young girl.

Lunching the next day at Moore's Alhambra Tavern, Eben's cabbie friend Gus (David Wayne) notices that Jennie's newspaper is dated 1910. Eben recalls that she spoke of her parents as performing artists at Ham-



**LEFT:** Jennie makes her first appearance in the film as a young girl, a stretch for the 28-year-old Jennifer Jones, but one she manages to make. **RIGHT:** Eben and Jennie (Joseph Cotten and Jennifer Jones) at the convent.

merstein's, a theater long since closed. Before they leave, Gus manages to con Mr. Moore (Albert Sharpe) into paying Adams three meals a day in return for painting a mural above the bar.

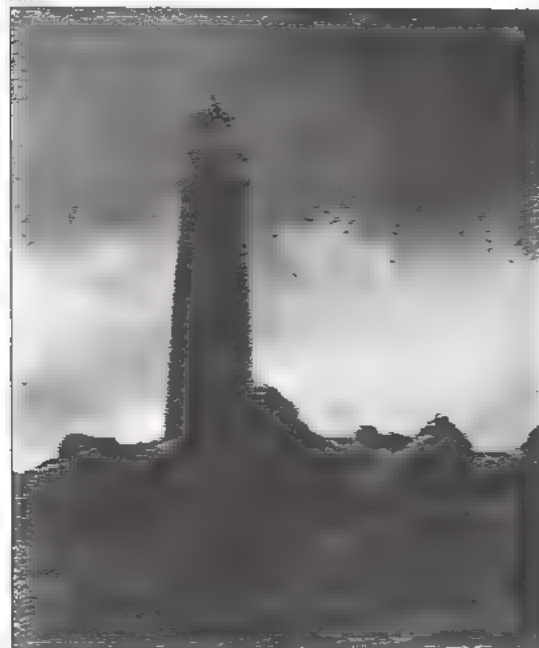
After a second visit to the art gallery, during which Matthews buys Adams' sketch of Jennie (seeing a "timeless" quality in the child's face), Eben goes skating in Central Park and experiences a feeling of "distance" from the city around him. Suddenly he sees Jennie skating toward him, slightly taller and definitely older. When he presents her with her scarf, she doesn't remember ever having had it. Captivated by this strange child, Eben decides to ask her parents for permission to paint Jennie's portrait. When he tries to learn where he can go to see her, Jennie responds that "there is no place . . . quite yet."

Again Jennie disappears as quietly as she came, only this time Miss Spinney has arrived on the scene—and it is apparent that she has not seen the child

His curiosity aroused, Eben meets an old woman (Maude Simmons) who used to work at Hammerstein's. She tells him that Jennie's parents, trapeze artists, were killed long ago when a wire broke during their act. Eben becomes convinced that something extraordinary is happening when the woman shows him a photograph of Jennie, as Eben knows her, taken 20 years past.

The artist next encounters Jennie, now in her teens, sobbing on a park bench over the death of her parents. Now convinced of a weird "bend" in time, Eben tells her what he already knows: "There's been an accident—a wire broke!"

**LEFT: PORTRAIT OF JENNIE (1948)** made fine use of actual location shooting in New York. **RIGHT:** The elaborate storm sequence was originally released in a wide-screen, tinted format.



Jennie calms down sufficiently to tell Eben that she's being sent to a convent. Eben confesses that the events in her life are a puzzle to him, that everything she speaks of happened in the past. As the couple watches stars peek out from behind a bank of clouds, Eben again finds himself alone.

The winter passes slowly as Eben realizes that he is falling in love with Jennie. Life, which had little meaning before he knew her, has become unbearable without her. The unveiling of his mural at Moore's brings him no satisfaction, and his despair deepens. At his lowest point, Eben enters his flat to find an even older Jennie waiting for him. His elation moves him to begin her portrait. She invites him to visit her at the convent, where Jennie points out her favorite teacher, Mother Mary of Mercy (Lillian Gish).

During Jennie's next absence, Matthews and Spinney visit Eben's studio to see his work in progress. Awed by the beauty of the painting, they assure him that he is creating a great work.

During Jennie's next visit the portrait is finished. She again finds Eben's painting of the lighthouse, which darkens her spirits. To change Jennie's mood, Eben shows her the scarf once more, after which she vanishes again.

Eben's faith that they will meet again is shaken, and at Gus' suggestion, he questions Mother Mary of Mercy. To his great shock, Eben learns of Jennie's death in a boating accident, during a hurricane off Cape Cod.

Following his instinct, Eben rushes to the New England coast and is led by an old sea captain (Clem Bevans) to a weathered salt (Henry Hull). The salt tells Eben of the time he rented his boat to a sad-eyed girl who used it to sail out to an old abandoned lighthouse—Land's End Light. Eben sets out to the lighthouse himself, hoping to save Jennie from a fate that she may have been given a second chance to avoid. After a harrowing sail in the full fury of a hurricane, Eben makes it to the lighthouse before her arrival. Jennie finally appears out of the storm, but Eben's desperate attempt to help her is dashed by a monstrous tidal wave that sweeps them apart for the last time.

Recovering in the captain's boathouse, Eben is visited by Miss Spinney. Her look of disbelief at his sad story disheartens him until he sees what she is holding—something that was next to him when he was found, alone, on the beach: Jennie's scarf. Eben finds peace in the reassurance that, in some undefined future, he will be reunited with Jennie forever.

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PORTRAIT OF JENNIE was a troubled production from the start. In 1944, David O. Selznick purchased the film

rights to Robert Nathan's 1939 novella from MGM for \$15,000 and had a script written by Peter Berneis, which was followed by a second adaptation by Leonardo Bercovici and finally a third script by Paul Osborn. The metaphysical prologue that set the mood for the film was penned by Ben Hecht.

Of course, Selznick was on hand at all times, making his own changes, most of them at the last minute. Casting went through a familiar evolution: the mighty mogul, prior to his personal involvement with Jennifer Jones, was considering Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh for the leads. Due in part to Olivier's influence over Leigh, which made her disregard aspects of her contract with Selznick, this never worked out. Casting the famous duo became too much of an obstacle, and another female lead was discussed by Selznick's staff: Shirley Temple, who had been cast in his epic wartime drama of 1944, *SINCE YOU WENT AWAY*. Selznick, however, could detect no

trace in the former child star of the spirit needed for his Jennie, and all talk of casting her was dropped.

As fate would have it, Selznick did not have far to look for his enigmatic title character. His final choice provided the dreamy quality needed for the role as well as his own real-life inspiration—for by this time, Selznick and Jones were lovers. The studio was still marketing its giant production of *DUEL IN THE SUN* (1946) when *JENNIE* was ready to go before the cameras, and Jones was as thoroughly secure in the lead as she was in Selznick's life.

Joseph Cotten, another Selznick contract player, was set to costar. Jones and Cotten had an excellent onscreen rapport, having worked together several times before, in *LOVE LETTERS* (1945), helmed by *JENNIE*'s director, William Dieterle, and bearing no small resemblance to *JENNIE*'s fantasy

ambience) and the aforementioned Selznick films *SINCE YOU WENT AWAY* and *DUEL IN THE SUN*.

The decision to film on location in New York City in February 1947 added to the film's authenticity, but also caused Selznick to almost abandon the production. Weather problems, an incomplete script, and poor initial results on film plagued the unit. William Dieterle had to put up with constant script updates and memos from Selznick in addition to battling the realities of the brutal winter weather, which on one occasion caused his camera to freeze.

Dieterle, a former film director in Germany, was known mainly for his mastery of crowd scenes and pictorial composition. Among his American film credits were *THE LIFE OF EMILE ZOLA* (1937), *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* (1939), and *DR. EHRLICH'S MAGIC BULLET* (1940). He began work on *PORTRAIT OF*

Courtesy of Footlight Records, NYC, NY







Ethel Barrymore and Ceci Kellaway play Mr. Mathews and Miss Spinney, the art dealers who help struggling artist Eben Adams (Joseph Cotten), pictured here with the portrait's actual artist, Robert Brackman.

JENNIE with a budget of \$1.5 million. His director of photography was Joseph August, a veteran of silent movies and contributor to the unique look of several John Ford films, notably *THE INFORMER* (1935). August had also lensed the RKO classics *GUNGA DIN* (1939) and *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*.

For the unique pictorial look of *JENNIE*, August sent to Hollywood for the ancient lenses he had used for the films of silent cowboy star William S. Hart. With these and a special "texturing" process filter, he created the fantasy world in which Eben and Jennie meet and fall in love.

Despite the considerable talents of August, the initial closeup shots of Jones and Cotten in Central Park were considered deplorable by Selznick. While he felt that part of the problem could be attributed to makeup, the results were deemed "wretched beyond words." Cotten was said to look about 80, and Jones, only 28, "a very dissipated and tired 40." Apparently these problems were overcome and shooting continued through the winter of '47.

On April 8th, with *JENNIE*'s budget already over \$2 million, an attempt at using a real lighthouse (Graves End Light off Boston) for the tempestuous finale ended with still more unusable footage. A "more realistic" squall was created later on a Hollywood soundstage. Joseph Cotten, in his autobiography *Vanity Will Get You Somewhere*, ironically recalled, "The storm scene, shot indoors, with tons of water all over us for so many weeks, has been written about as one of the greatest location scenes ever filmed!"

Real location shooting was far from over, however. In June, the Cloisters at Fort Tryon, New York, were utilized for the Convent scene with Cotten and Lillian Gish. On July 2nd, the unit moved on to Oldwick, New Jersey, for a picnic scene that was halted by four days of rain and more unavailing footage of Jones. (Her dark hair merged on film with a tree trunk and couldn't be seen.) Jones was set to perform a little dance, which Jerome Robbins had been hired to choreograph, over some rocks in a stream. Dieterle's efforts yielded only one good take, and the sequence was never used.

At this point, the postproduction on the film already underway, Selznick grew angry with editor Hal Kern and had him fired. (Kern had been at the racetrack when his boss wanted to preview some *JENNIE* footage for Mary Pickford.) The sacking, later regretted, may have been the major reason for some of the picture's incongruities.

Selznick now had to watch an inexperienced editor assemble his film. In a final attempt to assure success for a production close to his heart, a film many believed to be a "love letter" to his beloved Jennifer, a new concept was added: the fabulous storm sequence would unveil in a widescreen process, tinted sepia and pale green, the music resounding from multiple speakers. It would be followed by the piece de resistance—the final shot of the finished portrait in full Technicolor!

*PORTRAIT OF JENNIE* premiered in Los Angeles on Christmas Day, 1948. It's final cost: \$4.041 million. By

June 1950, it had earned \$1.51 million in rentals. Its rerelease that year under the name TIDAL WAVE failed to dredge up any new interest, and sadly, the film died a quiet death.

JENNIE would be the last picture produced in Hollywood by David O. Selznick. Tragically, it was also the last film ever photographed by Joseph August. According to Joseph Cotten, "Joe August, our brilliant, incomparable cameraman, walked into David's office and said, 'I think it's finished now, I'm satisfied.' He went over to the sofa, lay down and with a hauntingly beautiful smile on his lips, closed his eyes and never opened them again."

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Critical reaction to Selznick's fantasy were mixed. *Variety* called it an ethereal romance "told with style, taste and dignity." They added, however, that it "lacks the earthy warmth needed to spellbind when it goes . . . where the exploitable tricks of multiple-sized screen and sound will not be available." *Cue* magazine was tactful: "Snaring elusive fantasy is difficult under the best of conditions." *The New York Times* said of Jennifer Jones, "She is beaming and breathless most of the time as this oddly literal wraith."

Jones and Cotten did win foreign plaudits. The readers of *Cine Monde*, a French film publication, voted her Best Foreign Actress of the year, and he was voted Best Actor at the Venice International Film Festival in 1949. Domestically, the film managed to impress well enough for the Academy to award it an Oscar for special effects.

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Robert Nathan, a New York born and Harvard educated author of 50 volumes of poetry and prose, is best known for his short novel *Portrait of Jennie*. The final 86-minute film version follows the basic plot of Nathan's novella, but has several glaring omissions and modifications. In the book Jennie can be seen by anyone (and even goes on a picnic with Eben and Gus), but the film has her appear only to Eben, keeping the other characters in doubt of her existence. She also makes her first appearance in the book as a child of five, while the film places her age at around 10. Mrs. Jakes, the landlady, not only sees Jennie but loudly questions the morality of her tenant's choice of companion. The character of Gus is Jewish rather than Irish. The cabbie is also far more fleshed out in the film version, serving as a sounding board and moral support for Eben.

As conceived by Nathan, the mural painted by Adams for the Alhambra Bar would have made an effective addition to the film: it's of a lakeside picnic and features a disturbing rendering of Jennie, her skin white and her hair tangled and wet, almost as if she had been "drowned." (The picnic scene that inspires the painting was probably the New Jersey idyll that Dieterle tried unsuccessfully to film.)

The character of Arne Kunstler, a robust, colorful artist friend of Eben's from Provincetown, was com-

pletely dropped. The entire finale was revamped by Selznick in order to include the lighthouse sequence (the novel's Jennie simply runs to Eben up a storm-swept Cape Cod hill and vanishes), and the apocalyptic tidal wave was a nightmare reserved for the celluloid version only. (Nathan's intriguing postscript to the storm has Jennie Appleton reported missing from the steamship "Latania," upon which she was returning from a stay of eight years abroad.)

Since PORTRAIT OF JENNIE first hit the screen, and even during its making, there has been confusion about the story's meaning. According to Joseph Cotten, on one occasion Selznick himself came running onto the Central Park location shouting, "Stop, stop, I have reread the book, and I now understand it!"

Some still regard it as a ghost story, and even the late author himself thought that his "time" concept had been abused. Commenting on the film, Nathan complained that Selznick "was so afraid people would not understand my use of time that he changed it completely—changed it to a revenant!" (A revenant is a returned spirit or ghost.) Nathan wasn't very happy with JENNIE at all, especially the ending, adding: "They had a perfectly ridiculous storm—with Eben rushing up to the lighthouse, mooring like a calf."

Bovine references aside, this popular misconception of the film is puzzling, first because the story is much less satisfying if Jennie is merely a spectre, but most importantly because it makes much more sense when understood as the result of an intentional twist in time—intentional, in light of a belief (as the film has) that there are forces that shape our ends. There is no doubt that Jennie is a child of the past, that she did die, and that her reappearances conform to the chronology of her life. Eben becomes enmeshed in these events and shares them with her, even to the point that he knows



Jennifer Jones

what will happen to her in her future. Whenever Jennie is about to reappear, Eben experiences a strange sensation, "as though time were melting with the snow." The film's prologue itself says, "Science tells us that nothing ever dies, but only changes, that time itself does not pass but curves around us, and that the past and the future are together at our side forever." As Eben explains to Mother Mary, "I know now the pattern of Jennie's life. But I also know that I am part of it." Jennie herself, who has a deeper understanding, says to Eben, "We were lonely, unloved. Time made an error." Therefore the arc of the past had to be skewed to correct that error and have two souls meet as fate intended. In light of this, if we look on Jennie as a ghost in the traditional sense, the film does not even live up to its opening premise!

One of the frequent potshots taken at PORTRAIT OF JENNIE is that the story is confusing and disjointed. Some

Continued on page 109

SCARLET STREET 97



## *Something Sort of Grandish*

# David Wayne

interviewed by  
Richard Valley

Some fans know him only for the role he hated—Jervis Tetch, the Mad Hatter of television's 1960s camp meeting, *BATMAN*—but David Wayne's career had been long enough and successful enough for him to be wryly amused by the fact.

He had won the first Tony Award ever presented to a Best Supporting Actor in a Musical for his role as Og the leprechaun in the classic *FINIAN'S RAINBOW* (1948), introducing the songs "When I'm Not Near the Girl I Love" and "Something Sort of Grandish."

He had made his motion picture debut in *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE* (1948), a gentle fantasy film whose reputation has grown with the passage of time.

He had supported Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn in *ADAM'S RIB* (1949), the best loved of that legendary screen team's movies, and had played opposite the equally legendary Marilyn Monroe more often than any other actor.

His television career included several appearances on *ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS* and a memorable stint as Inspector Richard Queen on the 1976 mystery series *ELLERY QUEEN*.

Shortly before his death last year, David Wayne talked to *Scarlet Street* about *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE* and some of his other memorable screen appearances . . .







David Wayne's success as a singing, dancing, growing leprechaun in the Broadway musical *FINIAN'S RAINBOW* (for which he was the first to win a Tony Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Musical) led to his film debut as a fully human Irishman in *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE* (1948).

**David Wayne:** Well, I made *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE* first. I made it while I was doing a play, a musical on the Broadway stage called *FINIAN'S RAINBOW*. So I was shooting in the day and then playing at nights and matinees.

**Scarlet Street:** That's because *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE* was filmed on location, wasn't it?

**DW:** Yes. It was on location in New York most of the time.

**SS:** At that time, in the late 1940s, very few films were made outside of Hollywood. Were filming conditions difficult in New York?

**DW:** No, not at all. There was a studio up on 110th Street, I think it was, that's where all the interiors were done. I was not part of the shooting in the park, but apparently that was when Joe Cotten and Jennifer Jones were shooting some scenes in the snow in Central Park.

**SS:** In *FINIAN'S RAINBOW*, you played Og the leprechaun. Do you think it was this Irish role that led to your being cast as an Irishman in *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE*?

**DW:** I think so. David Selznick came to see the show and he wanted me to

do the part. I assume the fact that I played with an Irish accent influenced his casting.

**SS:** Did you find acting before a camera to be a difficult adjustment, especially as you were still appearing every night on stage?

**DW:** Well, not really—although Joe Cotten kind of took me under his wing and taught me the technique of picture making, which was absolutely new to me. I had no idea how to go about it. But once I got some of the technical fine points down, I found it not so different from stage acting. It was just a matter of less projection, really.

**SS:** Did you find, after you had made a few motion pictures, that you preferred film to stage?

**DW:** No, no—I always preferred the stage. You have personal contact with the audience.

**SS:** After making *GONE WITH THE WIND*, David Selznick became increasingly anxious to equal its success. He used to shoot and reshoot. Was that the case with *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE*?

**DW:** Well, I'll tell you a particular happening with me. He bought me out of the musical to send me out

to Hollywood, where I was to shoot for a week and then return to the musical. Apparently he paid as much to the producers of *FINIAN'S RAINBOW* for one week of my work as I got for the whole year for the play! (Laughs) And so I came back from Hollywood and proceeded to play in the show, and Selznick decided to reshoot a scene with me! I had to go through the whole thing again! They bought me out for another week and transported me to Hollywood, where I reshot the scene. Then I returned to the show—again.

**SS:** The producers could have financed another show simply by letting you out a week at a time.

**DW:** That's right! (Laughs)

**SS:** When you were cast in *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE*, did you read the novella on which it was based?

**DW:** Oh, yeah! Sure! I still have a copy of that book.

**SS:** Did you do background research whenever you played a part?

**DW:** Not really. I knew a little about the Irish rebellion, which the character I played referred to in the bar scene. "Up the Irish" and all that. And Mike Collins, who was a dead



**LEFT:** David Wayne made more movies with Marilyn Monroe than any other actor. They're pictured here (with James Gleason) in *WE'RE NOT MARRIED* (1952). **RIGHT:** David Wayne followed in the fiendish footsteps of Peter Lorre in the 1951 remake of the 1931 Fritz Lang classic, *M*.

soldier in the Irish Rebellion, was someone I kept mentioning.

**SS:** Your second film was *ADAM'S RIB*, which was directed by George Cukor. Whose direction did you prefer, Cukor's or *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE*'s William Dieterle?

**DW:** Oh, Cukor! No doubt about that! Dieterle had been a German director at UFA in Germany, and he brought some of his Teutonic stresses to the soundstage. He kind of pushed people around—but not as bad as Preminger! (Laughs) He was a bit of a Jewish Nazi, too!

**SS:** Is it true that Spencer Tracy never liked to rehearse and Katharine Hepburn liked to rehearse as much as possible?

**DW:** It was kind of a joke on the set, actually, because Tracy was so fabulously prepared. You know, Tracy couldn't sleep at night, so his chauffeur

would drive him out to the valley and most of the night he would learn his lines and determine what he would do with the scene the next day. I found that out from his chauffeur. Then he would come to the set, marvelously prepared, and he always thought—and probably this was true—that his first take was going to be as good as he made. But Hepburn insisted on more takes and he'd grudgingly do it, because he did about anything Katie demanded. (Laughs) Or asked of him.

**SS:** George Cukor had the label of woman's director pinned on him very early in his career, yet the male performances in his films are every bit as good as the women's.

**DW:** He made women very, very comfortable. Not that he made men uncomfortable, but women loved

working with him because he had a capability of getting deeply into their psyche. They appreciated it very much. Cukor probably spent more time directing women than he did men—but the results, men or women, were equally good.

**SS:** You were on Broadway in *FINIAN'S RAINBOW* playing a leprechaun and then you made your film debut playing an Irish cabbie. Was there any fear on your part that playing two Irish roles might typecast you?

**DW:** No, no—they were so far different from each other, just as an Irishman from Galway might be a lot different from an Irishman from Cork! (Laughs)

**SS:** You also varied between comedy and drama. For example, you were a comic soldier in *UP FRONT* and a child killer in *M*.

**LEFT:** David Wayne and Tom Ewell were cast as Bill Mauldin's Willie and Joe in *UP FRONT* (1951). **RIGHT:** It wasn't bigamy, but Wayne found himself with three wives (all of them Joanne Woodward) in *THE THREE FACES OF EVE* (1957).



DW: Well, I'll tell you frankly: I was making a picture with Darryl Zanuck down on the Ivory Coast of Africa, shooting at a town called Sassandra. We would fly every day to Sassandra and shoot and then fly back at night to Abidjan, which is the capital, because there was no place to stay in Sassandra. We were eating lunch one day and Darryl said, "You know, when I ran Fox, I made a big mistake with you. I let you act." (Laughs) He said, "I bought you for Fox after having seen you in ADAM'S RIB, and I should have kept you doing the same kind of role. That's the only way an actor makes a big success in pictures, by playing the same role over and over and over again." And I think he was quite right about that. I never became what you would call a big star, although they starred me in certain pictures, but they allowed me to do a very broad spectrum of acting—which I was capable of, but which is not the way to become a big star.

SS: What was the film you were making in Africa?

DW: It was called THE BIG GAMBLE, with Stephen Boyd and Juliette Greco, who was Darryl's girlfriend at that time. She was a French chanteuse. Not much of an actress.

SS: Maybe not, but she knew the big boss.

DW: Yes. Intimately. (Laughs)

SS: Have you any stories about making PORTRAIT OF JENNIE?

DW: I remember the first day we shot. We were sitting in that Irish Bar, which was an interior up on 110th Street. I was playing a scene with Joe Cotten at the table, and the camera was on Joe. They told me, "You're overlapping," because the camera was on Joe at that moment, not on me, and I didn't know what that meant. So Joe very carefully told me. He said, "They'll take a closeup of you and then they'll intercut." Now I had no idea what intercutting was until he explained it to me! From that moment on, I didn't overlap—and I don't think I ever did again, my whole screen life! (Laughs)

SS: Here's a subject that must come up a lot. You appeared in movies opposite Marilyn Monroe several times . . .

DW: Four times.

SS: Four times! So actually you were paired with her on screen more than any other actor.

DW: That's right.

SS: So you must be asked what it was like to work with her.

DW: Oh, yeah! That's one of the first questions they always ask me.

SS: So—what was it like?

DW: (Laughs) Well, I'll tell you an anecdote. I was making THE FRONT PAGE with Billy Wilder, and we got to talking about working with Marilyn. I said, "You know, I had to go 28 takes one time with Marilyn, in just a little scene sitting in an airplane." And he said, "28 takes? Let me tell you something. On SOME LIKE IT HOT, I went 50 takes with Marilyn. I took her over behind a flat and I said to her, 'Marilyn, don't

DW: Gee, I don't know. (Laughs) I kind of eased into it.

SS: In the 1960s, you appeared on the BATMAN show as Jervis Tetch, the Mad Hatter. You only appeared in two episodes, though . . .

DW: Yes. It was too tough to get me to do a second one. They held a gun to my head to do it. They had already written a script for the Mad Hatter, and I said I wouldn't do it. So they used all the strength of the studio in order to force me to do it. Finally, I just gave in.

SS: Why?

DW: Oh, I just thought it was cheap and beneath me, really, as a performer. But strangely enough, most of the fan mail I still get is from people who knew and loved BATMAN and new kids who still see it.

SS: You played Inspector Richard Queen on ELLERY QUEEN, a terrific show that vanished after only one season.

DW: Well, SONNY AND CHER were opposite us. They were the biggest hit that had come along in a long time, and they literally buried us.

SS: According to an interview with Richard Levinson, who produced the show, part of the problem was that your costar, Jim Hutton, didn't bring much energy to it.

DW: Really? I thought he did a very professional job. I don't know what Levinson was talking about. I'm surprised at that, I really am. Maybe it's Levinson trying to blame someone, but I don't know. I don't think that was fair of him—to blame Jim. I found Jim, as I said, thoroughly professional. It was pleasant to work with him.

SS: You've had such an extensive career. Of all the films and TV shows you've made, have you a particular favorite?

DW: I like a picture I did at Fox called WAIT 'TIL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE, which sounds like a musical but wasn't. It was the life story of a small town barber. I did it with Jean Peters, who was married to Howard Hughes. I liked ADAM'S RIB enormously, of course, and THE TENDER TRAP with Sinatra.

SS: Well, we thank you for speaking to Scarlet Street.

DW: Thank you. It's been a very pleasant interview.



David Wayne was the songwriting friend of Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn in ADAM'S RIB (1949).

worry," and she said, "Worry about what?" (Laughs)

SS: That airplane scene was in HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE.

DW: It was especially tough, because it was the first picture ever completed in CinemaScope. It was an interior of an airplane, and they couldn't just take off half the airplane as they do normally in shooting. Because of the wide scope of the camera, they had to have the Technicolor cameras and terribly hot lights and everything else inside the interior of the plane. And therefore the heat was awful! It was unbelievably hot and difficult!

SS: When did you start appearing on TV in addition to making films?





# Book Ends

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### THE 6 MESSIAHS

Mark Frost

William Morrow, 1995

404 pages—\$23.00

### THE LIST OF 7

Mark Frost

Avon, 1993

401 pages—\$5.99

Using real people as characters in fictional stories can be a dicey prospect, especially if an author portrays a well-known figure in a manner too different from public perception. Mark Frost, in his 1993 debut novel *The List of 7*, placed real-life Sherlock Holmes creator Arthur Conan Doyle in a fictional tale that was wildly (and enjoyably) fantastic, yet endowed his character with a quiet heroism and Victorian dignity that rang true to our imaginings.

This engrossing supernatural adventure had elements of modern horror, balanced by a comfortably old-fashioned sense of mystery that made it a highly enjoyable yarn. Frost entertainingly paralleled many of his characters with those of the Holmes stories, most prominently placing Conan Doyle in the role of Dr. Watson to Jack Sparks' Sherlock. The author fancifully suggested that the cool logic and supreme virtuosity of Sparks were the "real" inspirations for Conan Doyle's Great Detective. The reader also found characters cast in the mold of Inspector Lestrade, Mycroft Holmes, and Professor Moriarty, though this novel's villain and his enormously vile nature gave Moriarty a deadly serious run for his money.

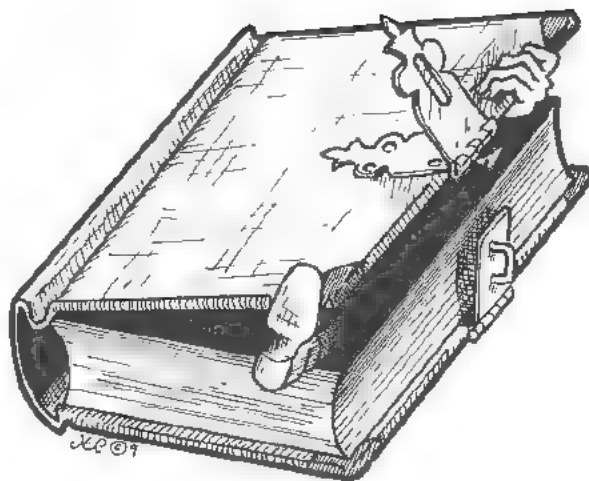
Mark Frost continues the fictional adventures of Arthur Conan Doyle in *The 6 Messiahs*. Well-blended elements of mystery and horror are again in evidence, as well as a few of the original tale's most intriguing characters. *The 6 Messiahs*, however, is more ambitious in its storytelling and broader in its scope, befitting its change of venue from Victorian England to the energetic United States of the late 1800s.

Ten years have passed since the events of the first novel and Conan Doyle's encounter with the mysterious Jack Sparks. Already celebrated

on both sides of the Atlantic as the creator of Mr. Sherlock Holmes (and somewhat reproached as his destroyer in the recently-published *Memoirs*), Doyle embarks on a five-month promotional tour of America, accompanied by his younger brother, Innes. No sooner have the Doyle brothers embarked on their ocean voyage to the Colonies, than they encounter a famous British medium, a mysterious Irish priest, and members of a murderous black-hooded cult bent on stealing a rare book of Jewish mysticism.

Producer/director/writer Frost (of *TWIN PEAKS* fame) gives *The 6 Messiahs* the structure and sweep of a television miniseries, with numerous distinctive locales and more than 30 characters whose paths cross en route to a remote, mystic destination. Six individuals from across the globe share a common dream: an ominous dark tower rising out of a desert, surrounded by a river of blood. These six—including a Japanese ninja, a Dakota medicine woman, a dapper young lawyer from India, and a rabbi from New York's lower east side—are impelled by the vision to travel to the desert of the American West, to face an unknown, frightening destiny.

Along the way, Frost provides his melting pot of protagonists, and his readers, with a detailed look at turn-of-the-century America, as well as a few unexpected encounters with some real-life public figures (including a certain New Jersey inventor who introduces Doyle and his companions to the miracle of moving pictures). As their American tour continues, the brothers Doyle soon find their press junket turning into an all-out battle with a secret organization that is using deadly force to obtain the rarest religious books on earth. These books, and the dark desert tower of so many shared dreams, hold the key to limitless power for a grim, strangely familiar man of proven evil intent.



*The 6 Messiahs*, while lacking the entertainingly pointed references to Sherlockiana that abound in *The List of 7*, retains the previous novel's effective combination of humor and thrills. It presents a cast of varied and colorful characters, a vivid evocation of America's past, and a frightening finale that combines elements of an Indiana Jones adventure and a Clive Barker shocker.

—John J. Mathews

### ERROL FLYNN: THE MOVIE POSTERS

Lawrence Bassoff

Lawrence Bassoff Collection

168 pages—\$24.95

Fans of Errol Flynn, the original Hollywood swashbuckler (and still the definitive movie Robin Hood), are in for a treat. Movie poster collector Lawrence Bassoff has assembled numerous posters and lobby cards from Flynn's movies in a handsome softcover volume simply called *Errol Flynn: The Movie Posters*.

At 14 x 11 inches, Bassoff's hefty book gives the reader his money's worth by displaying the posters from all but one of Flynn's films (the only exception being an obscure "semidocumentary" Flynn made in 1950 called *HELLO GOD*). Most of the posters are beautifully photographed in full, glorious color. In addition, Bassoff wisely supplies a brief history of each film, which range from such classics as *CAPTAIN BLOOD* (1935) to *KIM* (1951), and a brief but informative biography of the Tasmanian born star.

Bassoff's enthusiasm is infectious, especially when he writes in his introduction about his fascination with Flynn, an actor he believes has never truly been replaced. Along

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**THE ASTRO-ZOMBIES (1968)** John Cardinale stars as a mad doctor who creates murderous zombies in his lab. CIA chief Wendell Corey (THE FILE ON THELMA JORDAN) is out to stop him. Sultry Tura Satana is the evil dragon lady who leads a group of foreign agents. This cult classic was co-written by Wayne Rogers of M.A.S.H. Rogers was also executive producer. This is the new, official Director's authorized video release, except no imitations! Produced and directed by Ted V. Mikels. AZ 00W \$29.95

**THE DOLL SQUAD (1973)** An elite team of female assassins use every trick in the book (including machine guns, daggers, grenades, judo, karate, and kung fu) in order to save the world from the evil clutches of ex-CIA agent Michael Ansara. This is the uncredited forerunner to CHARLIE'S ANGELS, and is action-packed all the way. With the tough and sexy Tura Satana, Barbie Doll-like Sherry Vernon, Anthony Eisley, and Rafael Campos. Incredibly. Produced and directed by Ted V. Mikels. 92463 \$20.00

**BLOOD ORGY OF THE SHE-DEVILS (1973)** The evil witch Mara (Lia Zabornik) heads a coven of scantily dressed young witches who sacrifice men to various demons during sabbats. Mara is killed by a sleazy underworld character, but is reincarnated in order to extract revenge on her assassins. With the lovely Miss Biki, Leslie McRae, Victor Izay (author of a cookbook for actors), Tom Pace, William Bagdad, and psychic kabrina Kinkade. Look for Director/Producer Ted V. Mikels in a flashback sequence torturing (his then girlfriend) Sherry Vernon by sticking long needles in her bare back - and if that's not enough, she's burned at the stake while her child is whipped before her eyes. Upon the films initial release, newspapers refused to print the title, fearing it was too risqué for the times. An absolute must. 92583 \$20.00

**THE GIRL IN GOLD BOOTS (1968)** Naive small-town girl Leslie McRae runs away with shifty Tom Pace (a Stuart Whitman look-alike) to Hollywood with dreams of becoming a big star. She gets more than she bargained for when she's exposed to every type of vice imaginable (including drugs, robbery and murder), but nice-guy (and draft-dodger) "Cutter" (played by Jody Daniels) gets her back on the right track and then heads for the induction center. This is a fun, fast-paced film with plenty of bikini clad dancing babes and some great original music that includes the little tune, "Minnie Shimmy," "Wheels of Love," "Cowboy Santa," and "You Gotta Come Down." Partially filmed in Hollywood's famed Haunted House nightclub. Produced and directed by Ted V. Mikels. 92663 \$20.00

**THE CORPSE GRINDERS (1971)** An amazing Bile film that was started with no money and wound up reaching number eleven in box-office gross on the Variety weekly chart, outperforming the big expensive pictures of the day (much to the chagrin of the big studios). When ground-up human cadavers end up as ingredients in Lotus Cal Food ("For Cats Who Like People"), those felinas who partake are instilled with an endless craving for human meat, which causes them to attack their owners! Sean Kenny, Monika Kelly, and Sanford Mitchell star. Written by Arch Hall and Joseph L. Cranston, directed and produced by Ted V. Mikels. With tongue planted firmly in cheek this is a genuine horror classic that should not be missed. A sequel is in the works. 92163 \$20.00

**THE WORM EATERS (1977)** This has got to be one of the sickest, most repulsive films ever made. Director/Screenwriter Herb Robbins (THE THRILL KILLERS) stars as Ungar, a disfigured worm breeder. Gallons of goo and glop squirt through the air (and out of people) in an unbelievable and nauseating display that rivals anything seen on the screen before or after. A worm-eating contest took place at the Las Vegas premiere, and lucky theatre patrons were given "Giant Terria Worms in their own glop." Produced by Ted V. Mikels. For strong stomachs only. 92263 \$20.00

**TEN VIOLENT WOMEN (1979)** Ten fun-loving and adventurous young women decide to live life in the fast lane, and get themselves involved with drugs, jewel robbery, and angry Arabs, which all leads to an unforgettable trip to a women's correctional facility. This amazing film starts out like a typical female actioner, but at mid-point it transforms into a brutal, gut-wrenching women-in-prison epic that will have even the most jaded fan of this bizarre genre gasping for breath. Georgia Morgan (an obvious refugee from the Isle of Lesbos) turns in an incredible performance as the sadistic warden, and Doreen Ross and Sherry Vernon are excellent as her unfortunate victims of abuse. Look for Ted Mikels as a drug kingpin who meets his death by having a spiked high-heel driven into his mid-section. Not for the squeamish. Our favorite Ted V. Mikels film. 92363 \$20.00

**STRIKE ME DEADLY (1959)** First time on video, this is Producer-Director Ted V. Mikels very first feature film. A young couple's honeymoon is turned into a horrible nightmare when they cross paths with a jealous and sadistic madman. Starring Jeannine Riley (of PETTYCOAT JUNCTION fame) and Gary Clarke (THE VIRGINIAN). Considered by many to be Mikels' greatest film, one can see the pure raw energy and talent that Ted injected into this project. Truly a labor of love, he mortgaged his home and sold off his possessions to make this film possible. Set to a fiery backdrop of a raging forest fire, the story is still as fresh and exciting as it was in 1959. A collector's must. SW001 \$20.00

**SPIDER BABY (1964)** Johnny Legend presents the official video release of SPIDER BABY, complete and uncut from director Jack Hill's original 35 millimeter negative. Lon Chaney, Jr. leads an incredible family of inbred cannibals, and also sings the title song. With Carol Ohmart, Mantian Moreland, and Sid Haig. Plus: Johnny Legend hosts THE SPIDER BABY Reunion held April 1, 1994, featuring Sid Haig, Mary Michel, Beverly Washburn, and writer/director Jack Hill. You won't find a better print anywhere! JH004V \$29.95

**PIT STOP (1967)** Johnny Legend presents the official video release of Jack Hill's PIT STOP. The stars of SPIDER BABY, Sid Haig and Beverly Washburn, team up with Dick, EAST OF EDEN, Davalos, Brian Donlevy, CURSE OF THE FLY, Ellen Burstyn (THE RESURRECTION), and Tinsu Moody in this slam-bang stock-car psycho thriller. Roger Corman was the executive producer. JH002V \$29.95

**THE BIG BIRD CAGE (1972)** Pamela Grier and Sid Haig scorch the screen in this mind-melting Filipino female prison follow-up to THE BIG DOLL HOUSE, which was the most successful AIP film of the year and was responsible for the tremendous wave of women's prison epics that followed. Also starring Anita Ford, Candice Roman, Vic Diaz, and Carol Speed. This is the official video release, written and directed by Jack Hill. JH003V \$29.95

**THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS (1974)** From the ads "They gave their all for the team", "Not all the playing was on the football field!" "They live their fantasies on and off the field!" With Cheryl Rameaux Smith and Colleen Camp. This is the official video release version, and includes an interview with writer/director Jack Hill. JH004V \$29.95

**THE SWITCHBLADE SISTERS (1975)** Starring Robbie Lee, Asher Braunner, Joanne Nail, Monica Gayle, Marietta Clark, Michael Miller, and Kelly Bruce (Lenny's daughter) as "Donut." Feminism clearly takes a back seat to action as girl gangs terrorize fast food joints and roller rinks, climaxing with an epic tank battle in the streets. Predates the cycle of gang films by four years, rumored to be Joe Bob's favorite film of all time! Originally released as THE JEZEELS (the gang's name), this is the official video release and contains an interview with stars Joanne Nail, Robbie Lee, and director Jack Hill. JH005V \$29.95

**TED V. MIKELS... DIRECTING MOVIES ACTION TO WRAP (1993)** Join Director/Producer Ted V. Mikels for an inside look at the making of eleven of his films, including THE ASTRO ZOMBIES, THE BLACK KLANSMAN, MISSION: KILLFAST, and THE CORPSE GRINDERS. Mikels, from his T.V.M. Studios in Las Vegas, shows us trailers and film clips and talks about each picture before and after. Interviewed by associate producer (and fiancée) JDr. Wendy Altamura, Ph.D., and Gerald W. Carroll, associate producer and screenwriter. It's easy to see that Mikels truly loves his craft and is one of the nicest guys in the business. (100 Minutes. An exclusive from THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMWORKS. TVM89109 \$29.95

**FASTER, PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL! (1965)** This is the story of a new breed of superwoman emerging out of the ruthlessness of our times. We are introduced to three tuxedo Go-Go girls, Varla, Rosie, and Bille (Tura Satana, Lou Williams, and Hajji), wildly dancing the Watusi before the tears, jeers, and lecherous come-ons of their drooling air-male audience. The violence, implicit in the girls' tease, is quickly moved out of the microscopic bar into the outside world as they literally let go of themselves, embarking on a wild, violent, deadly journey of vengeance on all men. Varla, the outrageously abundant karate master leader of the pack, breaks the arms and back of one man, runs her Porsche over two others, grinds a fourth a muscleman against a wall and, eventually, deliberately goes down the path of her own self-destruction, dragging her two buxom cohorts along with her. This is the official, Russ Meyer video release. FM001V \$74.95

**MOTORPSYCHO (1965)** In this Russ Meyer classic, which was originally co-billed with FASTER, PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL!, the ever-lovely Hajji (who claims to be from another planet) teams up with Alex Rocco (THE GODFATHER) against three sadistic and murderous bikers. This tongue-in-cheek violence and sex feature set in the desert was slightly ahead of its time. The outlaw biker genre didn't begin until a year later with Roger Corman's THE WILD ANGELS. Stunning. An official Russ Meyer video release. FM014V \$74.95

**GIRL WITH A SLITCASE (1960)** Claudia Cardinale, a girl from the wrong side of the tracks who follows her ex-boyfriend to the big city only to fall in love with his adolescent brother. This was Claudia's first film, and was described by Leonard Maltin as "well-acted and worth seeing." GM10 \$20.00

**THAT NAUGHTY GIRL (1956)** A teenage Brigitte Bardot (AND GOD CREATED WOMAN) is the no-so-innocent daughter of a notorious crime boss in this saucy French comedy. When she's forced to go into hiding, her untamed nature becomes a nightmare for her appointed male guardian, in color. GM1 \$20.00

**INGA (1957)** Marie Ljebadi. EUGENIE... THE STORY OF HER JOURNEY INTO PERVERSION! is the virgin, seventeen-year-old who comes to live with her free-thinking Aunt after her parents are killed in

an accident. While there, she becomes infatuated with the Aunt's younger lover and blossoms into womanhood. Considered "shocking" in its day, and one of the three highest grossing erotic films of the decade. GM12 \$20.00

**DAGMAR'S HOT PANTS (1972)** Follow the hilarious and sextic exploits of the lovely Dagmar and her band of Danish escort girls during the period now referred to jokingly as the "swinging seventies." Featuring the bold beauties of FANNY HILL and WITHOUT A STITCH. Color. GM13 \$20.00

**NEVER TAKE SWEETS FROM A STRANGER (1960)** Owen Watford, Patrick Allen, Felix Aylmer, Niall MacGinnis, Allison Leggatt, Bill Nagy. Directed by Cyni Frankel. Produced by Anthony Hinds. Cinematography by Freddie Francis. One of the rarest and most sought-after Hammer films. In a small town, a well-respected elderly man is accused of making improper sexual advances to a small girl. A scandal erupts and the girl's father, a schoolteacher, tries to bring him to justice. This potentially explosive drama aroused fears that it might encourage what it set out to condemn, and was somewhat belatedly released without too much fanfare as a second feature. An outstanding film, from a gorgeous 35mm Megascopy print. First time on video. SM238 \$20.00

**ROOM TO LET (1950)** Another very early Hammer feature, from a BBC play by Margery Allingham. Echoing Marie Belloc Lowndes' "THE LODGER," it is the gripping story of a Victorian family who believe that their lodger, the sinister Dr. Fell (Valentine Dyall), is none other than Jack the Ripper! With Jimmy Haney, Christine Silver, Merle Tottenham, and Constance Smith. Directed and written by Godfrey Grayson, coscripted by John Gilling. SM092 \$20.00

**BLOOD ORANGE (1954)** This early Hammer murder mystery was directed by Terence Fisher and features Tom Conway as a detective solving a crime against a background of London fashion. With Mia Parely, Naomi Chance, and Eric Portmann. Released in the U.S. as THREE STOPS TO MURDER by Astor. SM107 \$20.00

**FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE (1953)** Terence Fisher directed Hammer's first venture into fantasy and science-fiction, the story of two scientists who both fall in love with the same woman. When she decides to marry one of them, the other overcomes his grief by making an exact duplicate of her in an experimental machine. Such is his success, that his creation also prefers his romantic rival! Starring Barbara Payton (who was later arrested for prostitution!) John van Eyssen, and Stephen Murray. SM048 \$20.00

**THE GIRL IN BLACK STOCKINGS (1957)** Lex Barker, Marnie Van Doren, Anne Bancroft, Marie Windsor. This cult favorite (and possibly her best performance) Marnie portrays a sleazy show girl caught up in a web of murder and terror at a chic Utah resort. A terrific cast makes this one shine, and Marnie looks absolutely fantastic! SM240 \$20.00

**FOUR WAYS OUT (1951)** Gina Lollobrigida, Renato Baldini. An engrossing drama of a soccer stadium robbery, and the motives and fates of the various thieves as they are tracked down by the authorities. Co-scripted by Federico Fellini and not released theatrically in the U.S. until 1955. SM130 \$20.00



**PLEASE MR. BALZAC (1956)** AKA MADEMOISELLE STRIPTEASE. Badger Bardot, Daniel Gelin. Bridget writes a scandalous, best-selling novel that gets her into big trouble with her conservative father. She eventually ends up in Paris as a stripper! A well-produced and highly enjoyable European sexploitation-comedy directed by Marc Allégret and cowritten by Roger Vadim. Bridget is absolutely stunning. X081S \$20.00

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with a foreword by the late Stewart Granger (who Flynn knew and believed to be his successor), Bassoff presents a detailed glossary of movie poster terminology, thus making this book a must have not only for Errol Flynn fans, but for collectors of classic movie posters in general.

—Sean Farrell

### DARK CARNIVAL


David J. Skal and Elias Savada  
Anchor Books, 1995  
359 pages—\$23.00

For genre film buffs, *Dark Carnival* is an extra special treat. Not only is it the first major exploration of the life and work of enigmatic film director Tod Browning, but it is another chance for author David J. Skal, this time with coauthor Elias Savada, to demonstrate that mix of scholarship and style that has made him the preeminent scholar of macabre pop culture.

Film buffs know the external facts: after a brief sideshow and dime circus career, Tod Browning broke into movies, creating with Lon Chaney Sr. some of the most bizarre films of the Silent Era. He went on to direct

Bela Lugosi in *DRACULA* (1931) at Universal, and then returned to MGM to make *FREAKS* (1932), the controversial picture that crippled his career.


Those facts are covered, but the authors do much to fill in the missing information vital to an understanding of Browning and his work. Using interviews never before released, and making public family records and anecdotes long since buried, Skal and Savada conjure up the Southern Gothic milieu that created Browning, and the events of his early life that shaped his peculiar and twisted ethos.

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Charles Albert "Tod" Browning was no little changeling, snuck into an unsuspecting Louisville, Kentucky family. Browning came from a long line of eccentrics, including one famous, alcoholic professional baseball-playing uncle for whom the "Louisville Slugger" baseball bat was created. Still, Browning felt alienated from his odd family. The youngster, who often put on neighborhood "shows" in his own backyard, was restless, and soon joined traveling riverboat shows and carnivals. It was there that Browning fell under the trance of sideshow freaks and mountebanks: P. T. Barnum meets Dr. Caligari!

Browning gravitated to movies, which had their genesis in tent-show grind houses. He started as a knock-about comedian, but soon moved behind the scenes, working with director D. W. Griffith on such epics as *INTOLERANCE* (1916). The fast-driving, alcoholic Browning almost finished his Hollywood career when he crashed his new car into a flatbed railroad car loaded with iron rails. The collision killed passenger Elmer Booth, then a popular film comedian, and nearly killed



Browning. The trauma to the director's body and psyche was substantial, and, perhaps, the full extent of the damage was never made public. Skal and Savada both figure this event into their exploration of the director's obsessions, and his recurring themes of deformity and dismemberment.

Browning's years in Hollywood are chronicled in detail. His controversial relationship with Chaney Sr. is explored, providing production stories for many rare and fascinating films. Something in the gratuitous cruelty and disfigurement mania that runs through their pictures together struck a chord with World War One weary audiences. Browning and Chaney were the dark side of the free-wheeling Jazz Age, a grim reminder of the high price paid before the national feeling of relief and release.

After the death of Chaney, Browning made an uneasy transition into the world of talkies. One again, author Skal takes the reader over the convoluted path of DRACULA from book to stage to film, and makes it all seem fresh. Following that film's success, MGM was eager to have their Dark Prince back, only to have him create his twisted masterpiece,

FREAKS. The film didn't totally kill Browning's Hollywood career, as the legend goes, but it did irrevocable harm.

Tod Browning makes a remarkable figure for a biography, and it's almost unbelievable that *Dark Carnival* is the first full-scale study of the subject. If the book offered nothing more than that, *Dark Carnival* would be an invaluable addition to any film or fantasy buff's library. Fortunately, Skal and Savada offer up a volume to savor. Whether making the cheesy worlds of freak shows and carnival tents come alive, recreating the fascinating world of the Silent Era, or plumbing the psychology of an unhappy, alcoholic, movie-directing sadist, Skal and Savada make long-distant events come alive. *Dark Carnival* is among the finest books of the year, regardless of genre.

—Bob Madison

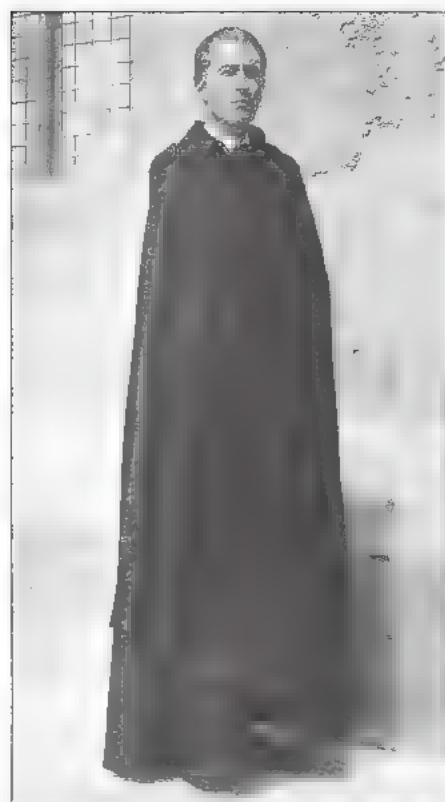
#### THE FEARMAKERS

John McCarty

St. Martin's Press, 1994

200 pages—\$14.95

Best known for his books on splatter movies, John McCarty and his team of six collaborators turn their critical focus back—way back in



some cases to profile 20 leading horror directors. With silent movie pioneers Benjamin Christensen and Roland West getting thrown into the

## The Master of Menace Finally Gets His Due!

The latest addition to the acclaimed Citadel Film Series—

### The Complete Films of Vincent Price

By Lucy Chase Williams

With an introduction by Vincent Price

This 288-page compendium is the first book on the subject in over 20 years.

Vincent Price used to joke that he and author Lucy Chase Williams "were at school together"; they first met while she was an undergrad at his alma mater, Yale. Now an entertainment publicist, Williams is also the project consultant for director Tim Burton's documentary homage to the actor's screen horror persona. Her extensive research has produced an in-depth biography, as well as complete cast and credit listings, plus background information for each of Price's 100 feature films.

In addition, the book contains more than 300 stills and candid photographs in color and black & white, many never-before-seen. Hollywood legends Gregory Peck, Jane Russell, Charlton Heston, Robert Mitchum, Maureen O'Hara, and Dennis Hopper - and horror greats Roger Corman and Christopher Lee, among others - contributed intimate personal reminiscences.

Price himself is also quoted throughout in this loving and exhaustive tribute to one of the cinema's most popular personalities.



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mix with such modernists as John Carpenter and Stuart Gordon, this study is nothing if not diverse. The book is arranged, quite sensibly, chronologically so that the reader can sense the ebb and flow of styles, trends, and tastes with each passing page and decade. Sparks may fly with the omission of cult director Mario Bava and Hitchcock fans, who have already been saddled with more books than they can cope with, will have to settle for a mere dedication. But, overall, McCarty's selection is valid.

With so many critical fingers in the pie (this is very much a book by committee), the writing tends to be spotty. Replacing the term "horror movie" with "fearfilm" is an eccentricity the book could have done without, but it at least serves to provide the text with a measure of uniformity as the writing duties shift from author to author. The star contributor for my money is *Films In Review* regular Ken Hanke, who offers excellent, insightful chapters on James Whale, Roman Polanski, David Cronenberg, and others. Such thoughtful commentary is sorely missed when the book sloughs through the numbingly familiar terrain of William Castle's madcap gimmickry or Roger Corman's ascension from his position as American International's Boy Wonder to the Top Gun of Hollywood independent producers. This is partly offset by coverage of such rarely discussed subjects as the pretalkie directors and Henri-Georges Clouzot, the auteur of *DIABOLIQUE* (1956).

At times, the attempts at analysis seem downright peculiar. A discourse on a scene in Freddie Francis' *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* (1968) in which vampire Christopher Lee carries off heroine Veronica Carlson, is interrupted by this dubious observation: "He dresses in black; she in the whitest of nightgowns—Francis pushes the fairy-tale motif inherent in horror films about as far as any director ever has." Unfortunately, the writer fails to establish how Francis' handling of the scene is any more stylish than that of a host of other directors who have tackled the identical situation in vampire movies before or since.

The chapters devoted to the Hammer directors contain the book's slopiest research. The Leslie Norman-

directed *X THE UNKNOWN* (1957) is incorrectly credited to Terence Fisher. Hammer's glorious use of Technicolor, long considered a studio hallmark, is ascribed to the cheap, muted Eastman Color process, which wasn't used until fairly late in the game.

The book's layout, frankly, is a mess. Stills are melodramatically angled monster-mag style, with captions set in little square boxes overlaid directly on top; the page numbers are enclosed in oversized, dagger-like graphics. With so much needless clutter, it's understandable that no one noticed



that all of the stills on page 57 are reproduced in negative!

One comes away from *The Fearmakers* wondering what is so limiting about the horror genre that so many of its innovators find their careers going belly up. Whale vanished from the scene at about the time as did his status at Universal. Scandal served to checkmate Polanski at his creative peak. One or two hit wonders like Romero, Carpenter, and Hooper exhausted their bag of tricks all too quickly. *The Fearmakers* tracks their ups and downs reasonably and readably. Nevertheless, readers seeking something more exhaustive may be better served by Dennis Fischer's *Horror Film Directors* (McFarland, 1991), available at approximately four times the length and cover price.

—Jack R. Phillips

## THE FILMS OF VINCENT PRICE

Lucy Chase Williams  
Citadel Press, 1995  
288 pages—\$19.95

Vincent Price's contribution to the realm of fantastic cinema is unique: with a sense of style and fun, he created his own unique character, the sinister, avuncular being Baby Boomers know as "Vincent Price."

That Price was his own greatest creation is something Lucy Chase Williams makes abundantly clear in her terrific bio-filmography, *The Films of Vincent Price*. While starring in any number of classic post-war horror films, he remained one of the most gifted men offscreen. His reputation as the Master of Menace nearly overshadows his enormous contributions to America's artistic community, his immense erudition, the stage triumphs from the 1930s through the 1970s, his culinary celebrity, his written work, his extensive lecture career, and his versatile performances as a character actor in Hollywood's Golden Age.

Nearly, but not quite.

In one sense, it's a shame that most genre enthusiasts know Price only through his horror film work. Vincent Price was, simply, one of the most remarkable men of his generation.

But in another sense, his association with horror films gave him instant celebrity and recognition, and he became a brand name identifiable around the world. His fame allowed him to invest in art, later opening his own gallery. It opened other doors as well, such as when Jacqueline Kennedy asked him to sit on her committee to preserve Native American art.

It is this Renaissance man that Lucy Chase Williams recreates in the biographical portions of her book. Her appreciation of his life is the best thing ever written on the man. With her jaunty prose style, she brings Price back to glorious life, with his enthusiasms and sense of fun intact. It's the most extensive bio ever provided for a Citadel book, and should remain a cornerstone work on Price's life.

Williams has painstakingly studied the Price archives at UCLA, and liberally sprinkles the bio with diary entries, bits of Price's unpublished poetry, quotes from friends and letters, and other bits of never-before

revealed information. She is candid about his personal life, including his three wives, friendships, devotion to work, and later-life disappointments. For the generation who grew up thinking of him as "Uncle Vincent," Williams puts an impressively human persona behind the popular visage.

Nor does she stint in covering the films. An iconoclast enthusiast, Williams does not "tow the party line" where Price's films are concerned. She denounces the cheap sadism of the grotesquely overrated 1968 production *THE CONQUEROR WORM* (which had me applauding; it's a nasty little film and its appeal remains a mystery), but is unaccountably hard on *DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN* (1972).

More interesting is her assessment of Price's Poe/Corman films. She ranks *PIT AND THE PENDULUM* (1961) as the finest entry in the series, while many enthusiasts (including myself) see either *HOUSE OF USHER* (1960) or *TOMB OF LIGEIA* (1965) as the jewel of the Poe pictures. If nothing else, *The Films of Vincent Price* will start a healthy debate among horror fans, and perhaps return attention to his oft-times overlooked body of work.

Given equal attention is Price's more "legitimate" films, with a gallery of lush character parts in such classics as *LAURA* (1944), *DRAGONWYCK* (1946), and *THE THREE MUSKETEERS* (1948). Hopefully, this coverage will serve as a reminder of Price's skill as a character player in the days before *HOUSE OF WAX* (1953).

There has been considerable buzz among film buffs concerning *The Films of Vincent Price*. After reading this advance manuscript copy, I cannot recommend the book highly enough to buffs of Price, horror films, or the Golden Age of Movies.

—Bob Madison

**ACTS OF MURDER: TRUE LIFE MURDER CASES FROM THE WORLD OF STAGE AND SCREEN**

Jonathan Goodman

Lyle Stuart Publishers

180 pages—\$8.95

With all the underhanded scheming and malicious deeds carried out every day in the entertainment industry (usually at lunch), it's a wonder there aren't more murders committed in this glamorous field. Yet Jonathan Goodman's fascinating book, *Acts of Murder*, proves that

such criminal acts among the thespian set may be more commonplace than one thinks.

Covering cases that have occurred in Hollywood and on the British stage, some of the best stories in *Acts of Murder* are those tantalizing tales which remain mysteries to this day. Take, for example, the still-unsolved murder of William Desmond Taylor, a renowned film director who was found shot to death in his home. His killer was kind enough to arrange Taylor's body in a neat, straight position on the floor for the police to find.

Then consider the mysterious death of the rising actress Thelma Todd, who made her name appearing opposite Laurel and Hardy and the Marx Brothers. Todd was found dead in her garage, seated in her beloved Pierce-Arrow. Her death was, at first, ruled an unfortunate accident: death by inhaling the car exhaust fumes while indoors. As Goodman points out, however, there appeared to be much more to this "accident" than met the eye. By introducing us to a cast of real-life suspects, he offers fascinating evidence that Thelma Todd may have been murdered.

Mystery buffs, as well as fans of the stage and films, will enjoy the nine true-life (or true-death) tales in *Acts of Murder*.

—Sean Farrell

**JAMES BOND: DID HE REALLY LIVE TWICE?**

John Bryan

Domino Books

130 pgs—No U.S. price given

"The name is Bond. James Bond."

"Elementary, my dear Bond. Martini? Cocaine?"

*James Bond: Did He Really Live Twice?* makes the interesting point that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories were a major influence on writer Ian Fleming when he created James Bond—and puts forth the intriguing theory that Bond is, in fact, a latter-day version of Holmes.

The author of this slim volume, John Bryan, a professional translator living in England on the Isle of Man, spends the majority of the book pointing out the similarities between Holmes and Bond, such as that both characters were offered knighthood by a grateful England, yet refused.

Both characters, according to Bryan, also faced the same caliber of

villains—men who were cultured, highly intelligent, and highly ambitious; usually in charge of a large-scale criminal organization. Conan Doyle's Professor James Moriarty and Fleming's Ernst Stavros Blofeld easily come to mind. Another similarity is that both Holmes and Bond would often engage in a one-on-one verbal duel of wits with their enemy.

Bryan even addresses what appears to be the most glaring difference between the two characters: their relationships with the opposite (you'll pardon the expression) sex. As many know, Sherlock Holmes would rather have nothing to do with women—even *the* woman—while randy old 007 can't get enough of them! In Bryan's view, Bond's reputation with women has been grossly exaggerated, mostly in the latter Bond films. In Fleming's books, Bond perceived the presence of a woman during one of his assignments to be something of a nuisance. On the other hand, Holmes' encounter with Irene Adler—at least in Bryan's perception, if not Conan Doyle's—shows that he was, indeed, capable of love.

Of course, one may perceive this as simply the bending of the facts to fit a particular point of view. But Bryan not only uses the literary works to back up his statements; he also calls to the reader's attention the Bond films, as well as the Basil Rathbone Sherlock Holmes movies, as evidence.

This may be the author's most controversial move, since not a few fans of the books revile the movie versions as being unfaithful to Conan Doyle's and Fleming's original visions (as Bryan himself does in his comments about Bond's love life). Besides, if one chooses to use the Holmes films as Gospel, why stop at the Rathbone series? Why not address such worthy Holmes motion pictures as *A STUDY IN SCARLET* (1933), *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1959), *A STUDY IN TERROR* (1966), *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* (1970), or *MURDER BY DECREE* (1979), for that matter?

Despite its poor typesetting, *James Bond: Did He Really Live Twice?* should satisfy die-hard fans of either character. But a word of warning: Do not read this book if you plan to read the original Holmes or Bond novels; for Mr. Bryan, in his enthusiasm, reveals all.

—Sean Farrell



## ELIZABETH RUSSELL

Continued from page 83

tures! The fans all write and say, "We've seen all your pictures" and they ask for autographs.

SS: Let's talk about some of your Hollywood friends.

ER: Maria Montez was my closest friend. DeWitt Bodeen sent everyone [seeking information] about her to me, and I told them I was writing a book about her myself. Maria was fabulous!

SS: You were also a friend of Agnes Moorehead's.

ER: Agnes Moorehead was a very close friend of mine from my radio days, and when I came out here I was in a film with her and Edward G. Robinson called *OUR VINES HAVE TENDER GRAPES*. Agnes stayed in my apartment when she was in New York. She had been with the Mercury Theatre with Joseph Cotten, and had done quite a lot.

SS: The Mercury Theatre was headed by Orson Welles.

ER: I'd been beau'd by [newspaper writer] Harry Crocker, and he had me in his column all the time. One night we all went to Jack Warner's to see this new film, and who was there but Orson Welles and Mike Todd. It was the first showing of *CASABLANCA*, and it was the night they all saw it for the first time. Everybody was floored by it—it was so marvelous!

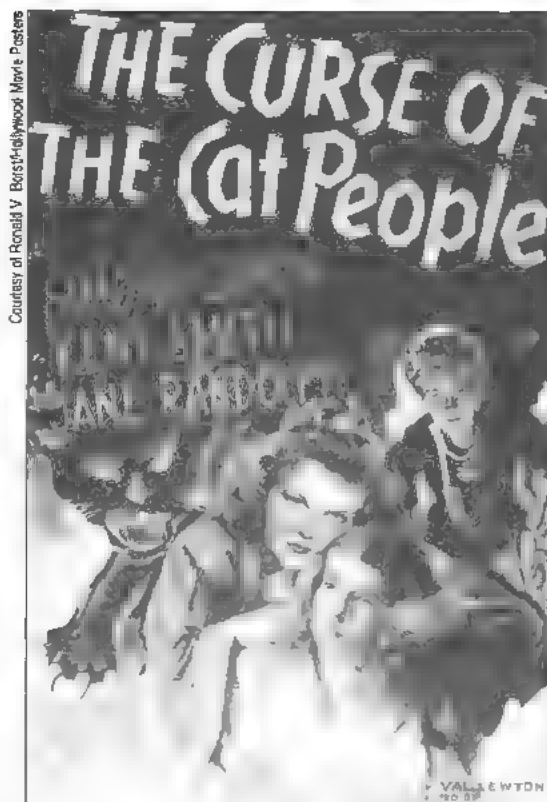
SS: Any other memories of the stars of that period?

ER: Oh, Cary Grant was on the Paramount lot when I was there. He invited me down to lunch when he

was living with Randolph Scott. They would have luncheons on the beach, and that was how I met Ginger Rogers.

SS: Looking back on your career, do you have any regrets?

ER: I think I quit the picture business too quickly. I might eventually have gotten somewhere. I had known Selznick when I was with the Powers agency. MGM, Paramount, and others would have talent scouts, and I happened to be in the Rotogravure section and everywhere else. Paramount had an acting school. I was in theater programs and other things.



Courtesy of Ronald V. Borst-Holmwood Movie Posters

They wanted me to go to school, but I was too busy. I had come out for Paramount, and got a lot of publicity in Louella Parsons' column. I also knew Hedda Hopper. I suppose I should have gone to school, as they suggested, but I had a young son who had to go to school, and I just could not leave him. I really wanted to write. And now I have accomplished that, to my own satisfaction.

SS: What do you think of the state of the arts today?

ER: There's no art anymore! Today, each script is almost the same. Then, the films were made from books. There's no fiction anymore, none worthy of the name. Fiction is finished. My generation, compared to this one, is so different. It's two different worlds. The generations—it's a wonder we can speak to each other!

SS: What advice would you give someone starting out in Hollywood today?

ER: You have to get to people any way you can, by any opening you can find. But it's not the way it used to be. Nepotism reigns supreme in today's movies. You can't go out as an actor without an agent. It's whom you know, that's what counts. But I don't know about today's movies. I saw one not long ago [presumably 1993's *A PERFECT WORLD*] with Kevin Costner as a man who breaks out of prison and kidnaps his little boy, and by the end of the picture the boy looks up to him and respects him—and he's a killer. And I thought, "My God, what kind of values are these new pictures teaching?"

## SHIRLEY JACKSON

Continued from page 68

scenes drag dreadfully, with Woodward beating viewers over the head with the sort of bleak humor that's only funny when one isn't being beaten over the head with it. Lighter touches, such as Mabel's offhanded, "I just buried my husband. It was a relief," work much better. As Mabel/Angela, Estelle Parsons does a commendable job embodying a long-repressed woman exulting at her newfound freedom, but tends to grin and cackle a bit too much (leading viewers to wonder if she isn't a few slices short of a loaf). The pinched-faced Barbara Baxley is good as both bitter landlady Mrs. Faun ("I get what I can") and her sister (who leads Angela to the boarding-house), and Sylvia Sydney is memorable as one of Angela's fellow boarders, a paranoid bookshop owner who pounces on her customers and screeches, "I'm watching! I'm watching!"

108 SCARLET STREET

On the 30th anniversary of her death, Shirley Jackson remains an obscure writer. Most of the film adaptations of her works suffer the same fate. *LIZZIE* has yet to be released on video, despite director Hugo Haas' cult following; it's mistakenly seen as a cheap knock-off of *THE THREE FACES OF EVE*. Though they are all faithful interpretations, the many versions of "The Lottery" are now so obscure that they're hardly ever seen or performed. *COME ALONG WITH ME* is currently available on tape from Coronet Film and Video, but at an exorbitant rate that only educational systems are likely to pay. On a positive note, *THE HAUNTING* was rereleased on video (as well as laserdisc) in late 1993 to great acclaim—and is due to be refilmed by Miramax Films, with Wes Craven slated to direct a screenplay by Edith Swensen.

Like the works of her enthusiast Stephen King, most of Shirley Jackson's prose does not translate well to stage or screen. That which does—and is handled correctly—ranks among the best horror has to offer.



Jennie and Eben's romantic idyll extends from New York City to the grassy fields of New Jersey (in a scene cut from the finished film), where a local resident cleverly milks a small cameo appearance.

## **PORTRAIT OF JENNIE**

*Continued from page 97*

of this can be blamed on its "cut and paste" production history. The cast had to learn new dialogue as it was being written, and new scenes were shot and added after production had officially wrapped. Astute viewers can easily spot dialogue incorporated into shots in which the actors are obviously saying something else. (This is first evident in the scene where Jennie sings her little song.) In the final reels, Henry Hull's looping makes him look as though he's in a foreign film, and Jennifer Jones appears not to be speaking at all during some of her dialogue in the hurricane scene. As a whole, though, these rough edges don't detract much and are far overshadowed by the film's strengths.

Most of JENNIE's elements blend beautifully and leave indelible impressions and images, and undeniably a major component in this formula is the adaptation by Dimitri Tiomkin of the music of Claude Debussy. Tiomkin, whose previous films included *LOST HORIZON* (1937), *THE GREAT WALTZ* (1938), and *DUEL IN THE SUN*, uses passages from some of Debussy's tone poems and impressionistic lyrical pieces, rearranged and pieced together to create a "score" especially suited to the world of Jennie Appleton. To express Eben Adams' loneliness and desperation (his "winter of the mind"), a passage from "Nocturnes," entitled "Nuages," is used under Joseph Cotten's opening narration as his character walks the frozen streets of Manhattan and enters Matthews and Spinney's art gallery for the first time. "Afternoon of a Faun," perhaps the most recognizable of Debussy's themes, is employed for Eben's first encounter with the strange, elfinlike Jennie and conveys the otherworldliness of her nature throughout the film. The innocent and childlike side of Jennie is sketched out with "Arabesque No. 1," while the full glory of her portrait is unveiled to the strains of "The Girl With the Flaxen Hair." Tiomkin also

makes effective use of "La Mer" to suggest Jennie's fears and apprehensions whenever she sees Adams' painting of the lighthouse, Land's End Light. To complete the musical interpretation of Jennie's world, none other than Bernard Herrmann contributed the enigmatic "Jennie's Song" (dubbed by Martha Mears), sung during the first meeting in Central Park.

The actual portrait that appears in the film was the work of artist Robert Brackman, and as the film's narrator says, it did hang for a period in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. In the film's final scene, a group of schoolgirls admire the work as Ethel Barrymore (Spinney) looks on. Watch closely and you'll see Anne Francis in one of her first film parts, thinking at the time how lucky she was to be sharing a shot with one of the legendary Barrymores. (Francis' only memory of director Dieterle is his penchant for wearing white cotton film-editor's gloves!)

In 1982, a musical version of *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE* was produced at the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse in New York City and won the Richard Rodgers Production Award in a national competition. The Nathan novel was adapted by Enid Futterman and Dennis Rosa, the music was written by Howard Marren, lyrics by Enid Futterman. Unfortunately, it soon followed Jennie into a cold oblivion. (In 1949, Nat King Cole had recorded "Portrait of Jennie," a song inspired by, but not part of, the Selznuck production.)

It is 46 years since the release of *PORTRAIT OF JENNIE*. In that time, filmmaking has evolved into something light years away from the sensibilities of its delicate vision. The film's lead characters speak idealistically as they express their growing love for each other, reflecting an era seemingly too distant and outmoded for modern sentiments. Yet the age-old dream of finding a perfect soulmate is timeless, and it is that elusive ideal that resides at the heart of this gentle tale.



**Portrait of Jennie is available from Scarlet Street Video! See Page 32!**



LEFT: Luke (Russ Tamblyn) senses the sexual tensions between his fellow investigators. RIGHT: Eleanor (Julie Harris) becomes increasingly distanced from her companions—at least her human ones!

## THE HAUNTING /THE INNOCENTS

*Continued from page 53*

symbol of the birth canal and also of the passage between the living world and the world of the spirit. The inside of the spiral, also known as the labyrinth, is dangerous, halfway between life and death. Wise emphasizes this imagery with odd camera positions, sometimes placing the camera sideways, for instance, so that the person walking inside the spiral stair seems to travel at an impossible angle.

Similarly, at Bly, Miss Giddens and Mrs. Grose walk up and down, from floor to floor, in scenes shot from far above or below, to dwarf the humans and magnify the long shadows and the architecture. A special lens filter, clear in the center and shaded darker at the edges, creates a pool of light around the governess and her candle as she wanders on the stairs. These scenes suggest M. C. Escher's many "impossible perspective" drawings of stairways.

In *THE HAUNTING*, the mundane-minded Luke wants no part of the labyrinth. In an early scene, he clowns on the haunted stair. The minute it moves under him, he vaults over the rail to the solid floor. Eleanor finally braves the dreaded library (a prime locus of the Hill House haunting, full of symbolism: a vault of knowledge). As she creeps up that stair, it undulates, groans, and threatens to pull away from the wall. She's consciously bent on self-destruction, on giving herself to the house. Still, she's ambivalent, also willing to play a "pity me, rescue me" game. She comes down when John risks his own life by climbing up to save her.

In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," the disintegration of the Usher "house" (family) becomes literal as the building itself collapses and sinks into the tarn. The disturbed families in *THE HAUNTING* and *THE INNOCENTS* are not blood relatives, but people grouped together by the common goal of penetrating the mysteries of these haunted homes and of their own minds. The buildings don't physically fall down like Poe's House of Usher. In *THE HAUNTING* and *THE INNOCENTS*, only the metaphorical house, the family, falls apart.

Near the end of *THE HAUNTING*, as she runs frantically from room to room, tangling herself in wind-blown curtains as chandeliers creak and sway above her, Eleanor thinks Hill House is falling because her world is collapsing and her mind is crumbling. She thinks, "I'm coming apart a little at a time. Now I know where I'm going. I'm disappearing inch by inch into this house."

It looks as if she's right. Absorbing Eleanor repairs this evil, sentient building and stops it from falling down. When she dies to take up residence as another Hill House ghost, the occult manifestations subside. John says, "The house has what it wants—for awhile."

Another theme the two films have in common is narcissism and neglect of family obligations. Again and again, Eleanor blurts out inappropriate, self-absorbed mutterings about "my mother," who died two months earlier. According to her, she martyred herself for 11 years, caring for "my mother mother mother mother mother mother mother," as she rails drunkenly to Theo.

However, when Eleanor tells a whopping lie about a "little apartment" where she now lives all by herself, the viewer can no longer trust Eleanor's account of her own past. Eleanor blames mother for everything. Viewers never see mother except for an image from Eleanor's mind of a cane rapping, and a voice calling imperiously. (This rapping connects with the Hill House noises, most often banging and tapping.) But we hear only Eleanor's side of the story. Did her family really force her to be a martyr or did she insist on playing the role? One wonders what life would have been like for a bedridden, elderly woman, at the mercy of an unstable daughter who hated her.

Theo, with her ESP, senses Eleanor's guilt over the possibility that she may have neglected her mother to death. Eleanor confesses this guilt to John, who comforts her and tells her how "good" she is without knowing the facts. Maybe Eleanor did neglect her helpless mother at the end. How does Eleanor know her mother tapped her cane for help on her last night if Eleanor really slept through it all? Eleanor's sad history forms an obvious parallel with that of Abigail Crain's neglectful companion, who committed suicide on the spiral stairs.



Miss Giddens in *THE INNOCENTS* is more clearly guilty of neglect. Nobody can stop her. The uncle "put me in charge, in sole charge, Mrs. Grose!" she says, to forestall any interference. Mrs. Grose "knows her place" too well to dare cause trouble for this mother-substitute who wants love but doesn't know how to give it.

Hints of trouble begin with Flora. She looks like a sweetie, but her favorite song, the haunting "O Willow Waly," by Paul Dehn, is morbid, about widowhood. She draws a picture of a lightning storm. Guessing her tortoise probably can't swim, she puts him in the lake before she asks. Fascinated, smiling, she cries, "Oh, look! A lovely spider, and it's eating a butterfly!" She doesn't try to save the struggling butterfly.

Miss Giddens never catches a nasty, sly expression that often crosses Flora's pretty face. She neglects Flora by not really focussing on what the girl does. A good governess would intervene when Flora delights in an animal's misery, a red flag for sadistic tendencies in children.

But worse is yet to come. The viewer watches the governess actually kill the other child in her care. Focusing on Miles only as a means to her own satisfaction, she fails to realize that she pressures him more than he can bear. The confrontation begins in the greenhouse, where woman and boy both drip with sweat and hothouse dampness in an atmosphere fraught with barely-sublimated sexuality.

Miles claims that the school sent him home because "I'm different."

She protests that he's the same as other boys.

He says in that cool, strange, adult voice, "No, my dear, you don't think I'm like any other boy. That's why you're afraid." Finally, he admits he got expelled because "I said things . . . Sometimes I heard things. Sometimes at night. Everything was dark. They screamed. The masters heard about it. They said that I frightened the other boys." It's all so vague. Maybe he was only telling ghost stories. Like this one. Maybe not.

As Miss Giddens closes in, relentlessly demanding details as the boy's breathing grows labored, she sees Quint's apparition appear through the greenhouse glass. Miles accuses, "You're afraid you might be mad!" He calls her a "damned dirty-munded hag" moments before he falls dead while trying to escape from her.

"I'm not cruel," Miss Giddens had insisted earlier. "My father taught me to love people and help them, help them even if they refuse my help, even if it hurts them sometimes." But the death of Miles is evidence enough that she is cruel, whether or not she's right that he was possessed. Everything she has tried to do has backfired. She tells the dead child that Quint can't have him. The soul of Miles is hers now. Whether she won his soul is debatable, but she's definitely won the limp little corpse with its eyes glazed over. She has destroyed Miles in order

to save him.

Eleanor in *THE HAUNTING* also suffers and causes suffering because of her destructive self-absorption. Curiously, most viewers see Eleanor only as a victim and buy into the way she blames all her woe on her family. True, Eleanor's life looks like something out of Dickens. As she confesses dramatically near the end of the film, she doesn't really live in that "little apartment," but sleeps on her sister's living-room couch. According to Eleanor, she pays a good part of her sister's rent for this privilege.

But wait a minute . . . how much rent does Eleanor pay, exactly? We never find out. Unless her sister has taken her in out of charity, this substantial rent Eleanor says she pays ought to be enough for her to find roommates and share an apartment, with a real bed. The sister and brother-in-law, seen briefly at the beginning of the film, are smug, self-righteous prigs, but they're also fairly normal. Eleanor clearly is not. Eleanor can't or won't take care of herself.

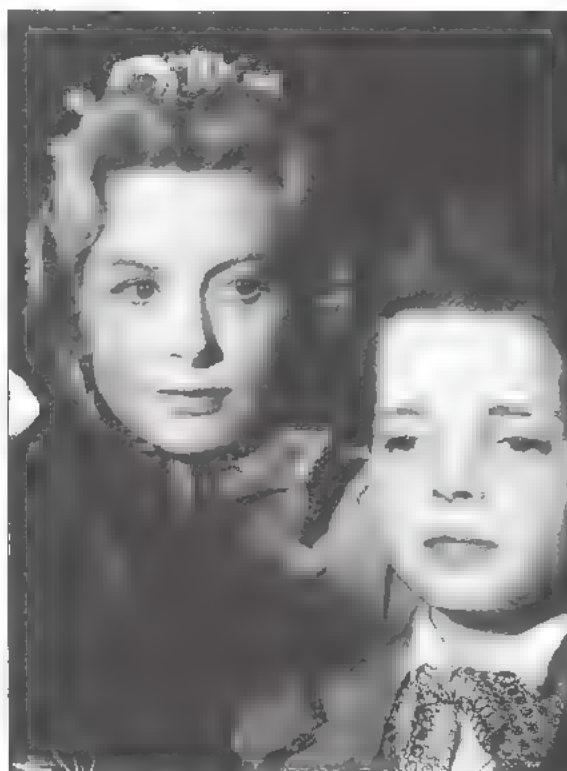
It's hardly surprising that nobody else will take care of her, either, when she makes herself so undesirable. She doesn't just let people take advantage of her; she makes them. Eleanor is passive-aggressive, as irritating as she is pathetic. Maybe some of her family's problems are her fault.

The sister looks terrible, coercing Eleanor to stay home, with the maudlin argument that mother wouldn't want Eleanor to go. However, Eleanor is so obsessed with mother that this argument stands the best chance of winning. Maybe sister Carrie and her husband control Eleanor not to imprison but to protect her. (Why would they want Eleanor in their living room? Even if they're getting some housekeeping or babysitting or rent money out of her, she's dreadfully in the way.) Later events prove the family is right to try to stop Eleanor from driving off when she's so obviously, deeply depressed, on a strange

adventure she refuses to explain. Keeping Eleanor home might very well have saved her life.

In the closed-off environment of Hill House, it's easy to forget that Eleanor doesn't live in medieval Europe. In modern America, a family can't force an adult to live the way Eleanor lives. If her family could have afforded a laundress for an incontinent, invalid mother, why didn't Eleanor hire one? If other family members gave her all the responsibility of caring for mother but refused financial support, then why didn't she sue, or apply for social services or for power of attorney? She manipulates people into feeling sorry for her by conspicuously sitting around wishing life would happen to her, then whining when the life that arrives isn't to her liking.

Eleanor wears her frumpy clothes as if they were "kick me" signs. Theodora sports a fashionable Mary Quant wardrobe in 1963, the year of the Kennedy assassi-



Miss Giddens (Deborah Kerr) loves children—not wisely, but too well.

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## SCARLET STREET VIDEO

nation, the Beatles' debut album, and white lipstick. Eleanor, with no makeup, wears calf-length tweed and hair cranked into an unflattering granny bun. It's hard work to look that bad, but image is so important to Eleanor that she buys new dowdy clothes for her Hill House "vacation."

When she wants to use the family car, on the reasonable grounds that she paid for half of it, her family says no. She sneaks off to "steal" her own car. Naturally, the parking attendant takes one look and hassles her. Dudley (Valentine Dyal), the sneering caretaker at Hill House, spots Eleanor's vulnerability at once and automatically bullies her. In each situation, she triumphs, sort of: the attendant gives her the car and Dudley opens the gate. But each time, she pays a high price in humiliation. No matter where she goes to escape, she makes sure she hasn't got a chance.

Since Eleanor wants attention and doesn't think she can get love, she'll settle for pity. She restyles her hair in an inept imitation of Theo's, then tells John that she sleeps on her left side because, "I read someplace that it wears the heart out faster." Most women wouldn't consider this an especially promising strategy to turn a man on. She's so close to homelessness because she can't make friends this way and has nearly exhausted her family's patience.

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Thus the heroines of both films are isolated not only by their circumstances, but by their own flaws, their own choices. They're tragic figures, not mere monster food. Each is a victim, but expedites her own downfall.

Perhaps the most impressive thing these films have in common is the lack of cheap shocks. Wise and Clayton dare to disturb the audience, not just entertain. This writer, an impressionable kid in a cavernous, dark old theater when these films were first released, got nightmares all over again as an adult, from watching the tapes in a well-lit room. What makes these films so powerful is that Eleanor and Miss Giddens experience extreme manifestations of universal problems.

It's frightening to recognize ourselves in these women. Learn to know nearly anyone, no matter how secure, and the ghosts begin to rise from their graves. Most of us have experienced unreciprocated love. We've played the degrading game of "pity me, rescue me." There's something unhealthy in the background of nearly every family. Coming to terms with our own sexuality, nearly all of us fear we may experience "abnormal desires." We fear insanity, death, or the living death of loneliness. Who among us has an attic free of ghosts?



## Coming up in *Scarlet Street* #21: The Trouble With Hitchcock!



**LEFT:** In *THE HAUNTING* (1963), Luke (Russ Tamblyn) makes a play for Theodora (Claire Bloom) before he realizes that she's more interested in Eleanor. **RIGHT:** Child actor Rusty Tamblyn.

## RUSS TAMBLYN

*Continued from page 73*

through my window, which happened to be in front, and I couldn't sleep. So I got up and thought, "You know, I think I'll go out back and see if I can see a ghost tonight. It would really be sort of fun, so I'll just go out and look." I remember there were little stones on the walkway. It went way out into the back and it was pitch black; I could barely see the stones. They had a private little cemetery, all broken tombstones, where people from the house who had died years ago were buried. An eight-year-old had committed suicide, and a 12-year-old had disappeared, and someone else had been murdered. So I went walking out there to see this woman ghost who people had been seeing for hundreds of years—and all of a sudden there was a moment when I felt this cold on the back of my neck. It was like somebody had laid a brick of ice right across my neck. I actually hunched forward; I mean, it was just freezing! There was a path off to the right that went back to the house, and I had to decide whether I wanted to turn

around and see the ghost or keep walking. I chose to walk. I never turned around to look; I never saw it. In fact, I kinda ran! Not walked. (Laughs)

**SS:** *We don't blame you!*

**RT:** I can assure you that, even if you don't believe in ghosts, if that ever happens, you don't wanna see it. A lot of people say, "God, I'd love to see a ghost!"—but when it happens, fear sets in first.

**SS:** *Did you tell any of your coworkers about this experience?*

**RT:** Eventually. I didn't tell while we were doing it, because I was afraid they wouldn't believe me. Eventually I told Bob Wise. He thought it was pretty fascinating.

**SS:** *THE HAUNTING is a pretty frightening film.*

**RT:** It was a great movie. When I saw it the first time, it was the first time that I heard the noise at the door and saw a lot of stuff that I hadn't seen while we were filming. I'll tell you something: I turned that movie down originally. I was in Paris and Robert Wise, who was in England, sent me the script. I read it and I didn't like it. I didn't think my part was big enough, or good enough; I thought it

was the weakest part in the movie. Everyone else had more depth. Anyway, I called Bob and said, "I'm sorry; I really don't wanna do it." And he said, "It's okay. I understand." Two days later, I flew back to California and my agent phoned and said MGM had called—I was under contract there—"and they said that, if you don't do the movie, they're gonna put you on suspension." Which means, they take away your salary. And so I thought about it. (Laughs) Of course, when I saw the movie I realized it was great. In retrospect, it's one of the best movies I ever made!

**SS:** *Technically, it's very impressive.*

**RT:** The technicians were excellent. Better in England than in the United States. I know that because they did all those sets in *TOM THUMB*. You know, that giant crib was 30 feet long and 20 feet high!

**SS:** *You've told us some wonderful stories. Why haven't you put them all down in a book?*

**RT:** Maybe in a couple of years. Maybe I'll sit down and write it . . .

**The Haunting on video! See page 32!**



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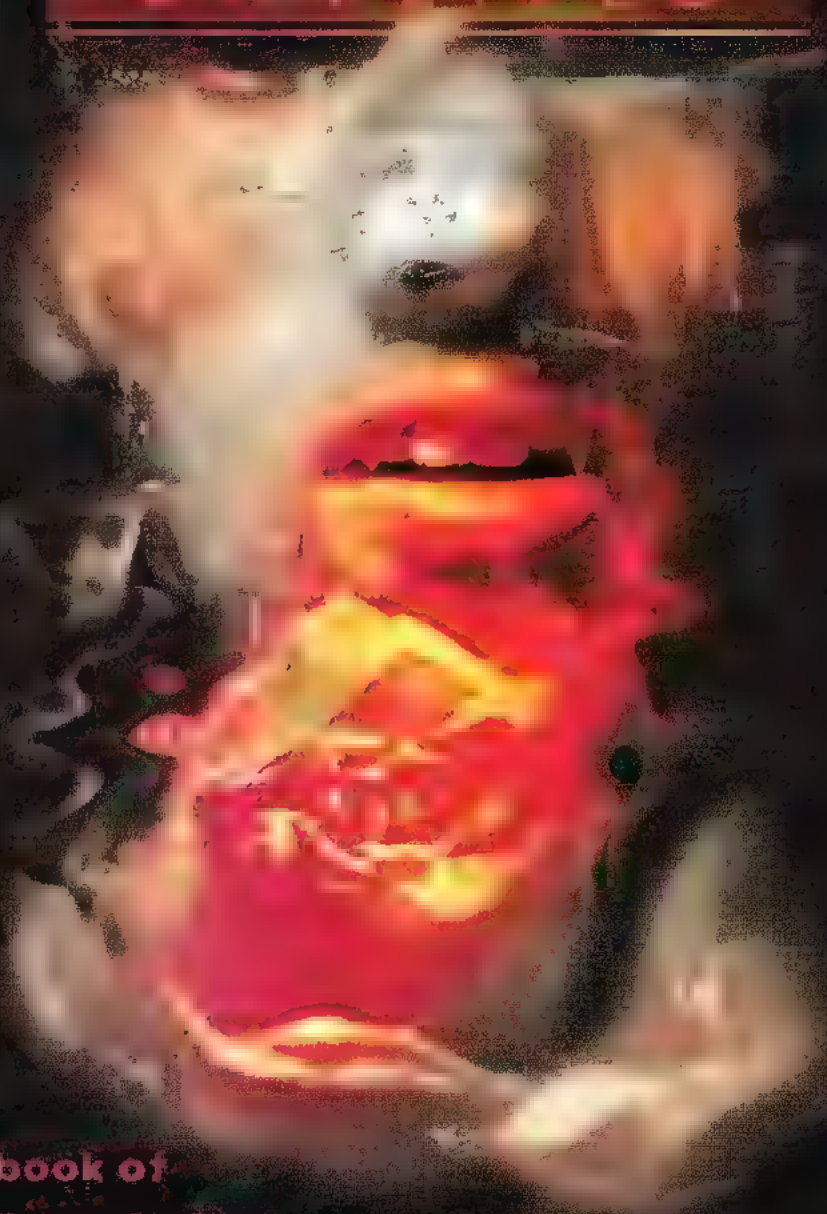
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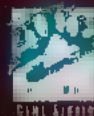
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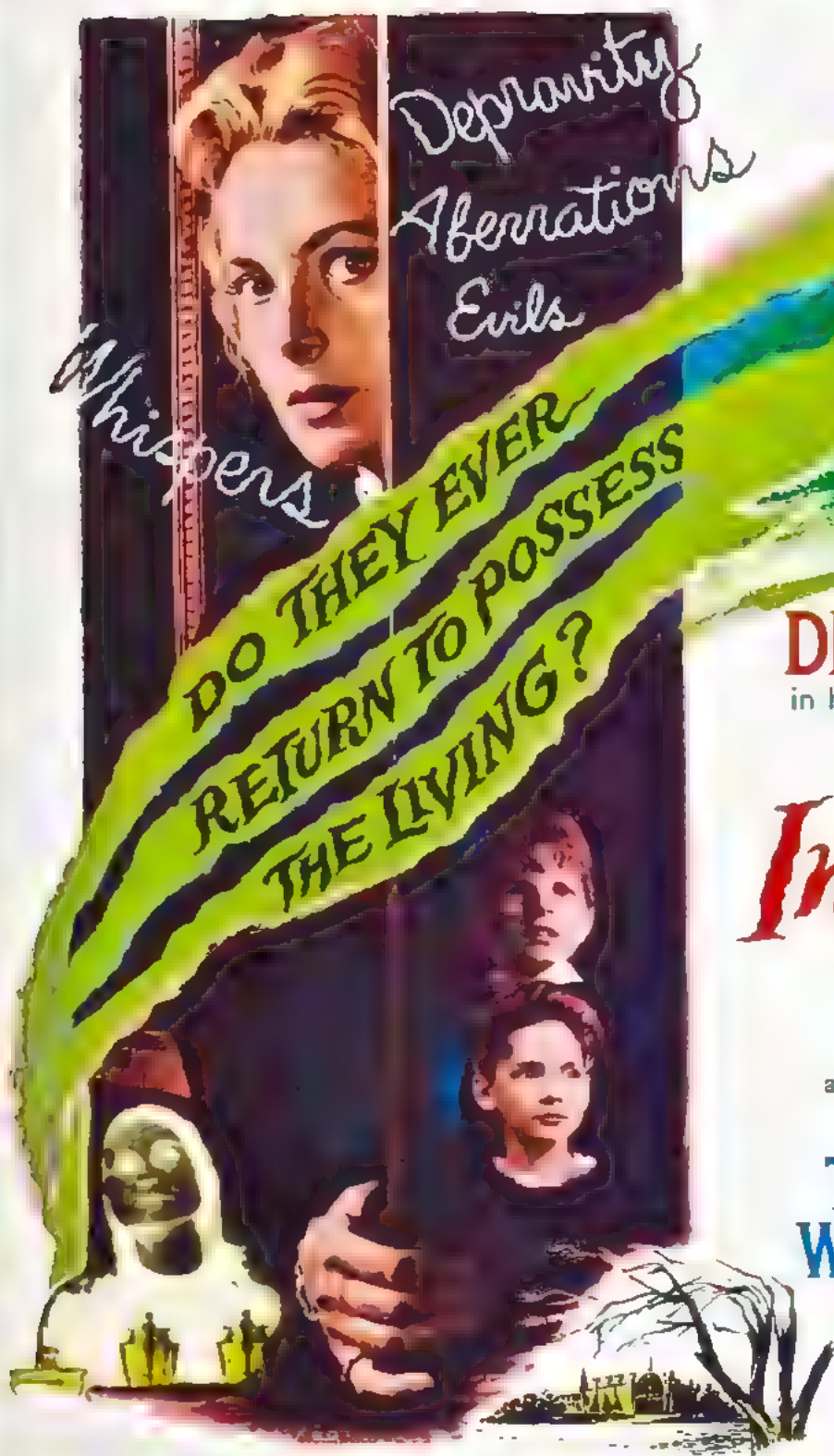
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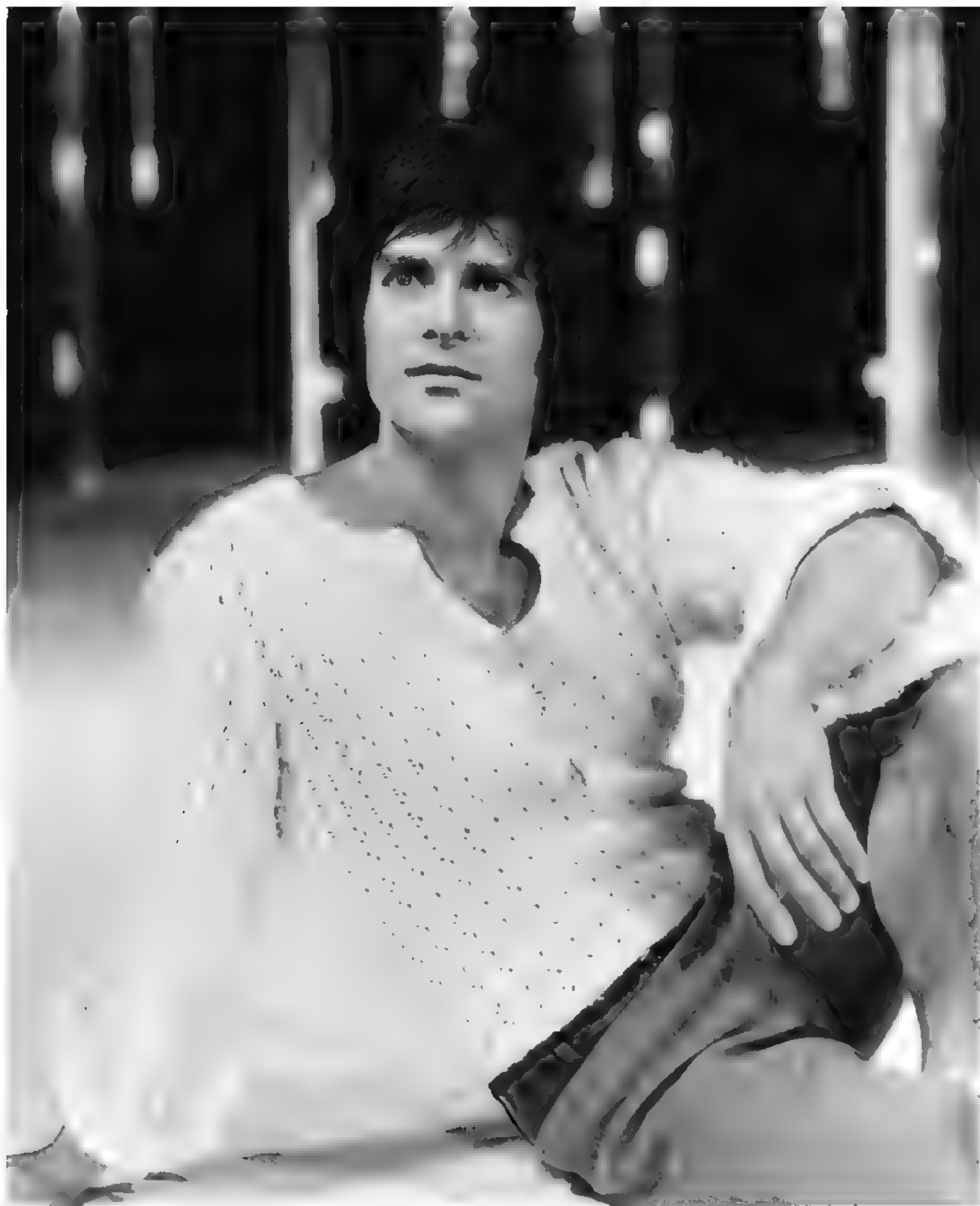
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